School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1399389

The Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

1a leats axv.

Introd.

CHRIST AND THE NATION

Demy 8vo, cloth, 18/- net.

THE FINALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. By Professor G. B. FOSTER.

Crown 8vo, cloth, 5/- net.

THE PROGRAMME OF MODERNISM. Translated from the Italian by GEORGE TYRRELL, M.A. With an Introduction by A. L. LILLEY, M.A.

WHAT IS RELIGION? By Professor W. BOUSSET. Translated by F. B. LOW. [*Second Edition.*

CHRISTIAN ORIGINS. By OTTO PFLEIDERER, D.D. Translated by DANIEL A. HUEBSCH, Ph.D.

RELIGION AND HISTORIC FAITHS. By OTTO PFLEIDERER, D.D.

THE BIBLE AS ENGLISH LITERATURE. By Professor J. H. GARDNER.

THE GOLDEN SAYINGS OF THE BLESSED BROTHER GILES OF ASSISI. Translated by Father PASCHAL ROBINSON.

London: T. FISHER UNWIN

CHRIST AND THE NATION

WESTMINSTER AND OTHER SERMONS

Sermons

BY

H. HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.

Canon of Westminster and Rector of St. Margaret's

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
ADELPHI TERRACE. MCMVIII

PRESENTATION COPY

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

[*All Rights Reserved*]

PRESENTATION
COPY

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION—OF MODERN PREACHING . . . 1

I. THE CRISIS OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH (Isaiah lxv. 8). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 2nd Sunday after Easter, April 29, 1906 17

II. THE RELIGIOUS REUNION OF THE NATION, being the substance of a speech delivered at Whitefield's on Sunday afternoon, December 22, 1907, at the invitation of the Rev. Silvester Horne 33

III. REUNION—A PLEA AND A REMONSTRANCE (St. Matthew vii. 3–5). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on Whit Sunday, June 3, 1906 54

IV. CHRIST AND THE NATIONAL LIFE (Judges v. 23). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 2nd Sunday after Trinity, July 2, 1905 . 73

V. THE CLAIMS OF CÆSAR AND OF GOD (St. Matthew xxii. 15–22). Preached in Westminster Abbey on the 16th Sunday after Trinity, September 15, 1907 86

VI. THE CHRISTIAN IN PUBLIC LIFE (1 Thessalonians v. 19–22). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on October 28, 1906 (20th Sunday after Trinity), being the first Sunday after the reassembling of Parliament 102

VII. NATIONAL PRIVILEGE AND NATIONAL DUTY (Amos iii. 1, 2). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on Guy Fawkes Day, November 5, 1905 117

VIII. THE TRUE PATRIOTISM BORN OF FAITH (Zephaniah i. 12; Hebrews xi. 27). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on the first Sunday in Session, being Sexagesima Sunday, February 18, 1906 131

IX. THE SIN OF SODOM (Ezekiel xvi. 49, 50; St. Matthew xi. 24). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 1st Sunday in Lent, February 17, 1907; being also the first Sunday in the Session of Parliament 147

X. JUSTICE (Ecclesiastes iv. 1; St. Matthew xxii. 39). Sermon preached in Westminster Abbey on Guy Fawkes Day, 1905 162

XI. FANATICISM (Acts xix. 34; 1 Corinthians xv. 32). Preached in Westminster Abbey on the 2nd Sunday after Easter, April 29, 1906 . . . 178

XII. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES (St. Matthew xvi. 3; Romans xiii. 11). Preached in Glasgow Cathedral on Sunday, October 1, 1905 . . . 193

XIII. THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY (Revelation i. 10). Preached in Westminster Abbey on March 17, 1907 210

XIV. DIDACTIC RESERVE (St. Mark iv. 21–25). Preached before the University of Aberdeen on October 29, 1905 227

XV. THE DUTY OF INTELLECTUAL EFFORT (1 Corinthians xiv. 20). Preached to the undergraduates in St. Mary's, Oxford, on November 11, 1906 245

XVI. THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP (Psalm cix. 8–10, 12; St. Matthew v. 43, 44). Preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 18th Sunday after Trinity, October 22, 1905 265

XVII. CELTIC CHRISTIANITY (Hebrews xi. 27). Preached in St. David's (Welsh) Church, Paddington Green, on the 2nd Sunday after Easter, May 7, 1905 280

XVIII. THE DIFFICULTY OF A REVELATION WHICH IS ALSO A DEVELOPMENT (Galatians i. 8; 1 Corinthians xiii. 12, 13). Preached to the University of Glasgow in the Bute Hall on February 11, 1906 296

CHRIST AND THE NATION

INTRODUCTION

OF MODERN PREACHING

The modern preacher fulfils his duty under conditions at once novel, embarrassing, and extraordinarily difficult. Whether his official status, or his professional opportunity, or the circumstances in which he must work, or his personal qualifications be considered, the conclusion will be the same. Preaching in the twentieth century is greatly more difficult than in former times. A volume of sermons by one who has to preach constantly in so famous a religious centre as Westminster may well be prefaced by a frank confession of the difficulties and perplexities which attach to modern preaching, and which seem to grow greater with reflection and experience. If, indeed, the author has any claim to attention, it must be based on the necessity laid on him by the circumstances of his life to consider with anxious sincerity the nature of the obligations implied in the preacher's office, and the methods

by which those obligations can in any degree be satisfied.

It is evident to all that the place of the sermon in the public service has altered. Two causes have in recent years co-operated in shortening the length, and reducing the importance, of modern sermons. On the one hand, the great development of "sacred" music has so protracted the ordinary service that there is much less time left for the preaching than heretofore. On the other hand, the importance of the service as compared with that of the preaching has greatly increased. These causes have had a twofold operation, on the preacher and on the congregation. It is certainly as true of preaching as of any other form of human effort that the lowering of ideals implies loss of efficiency, and it is not less true that the ideal of most modern preachers when they prepare for the weekly "sermonette" of fifteen or twenty minutes, which is all that many congregations desire, and as much as some will tolerate, is almost infinitely lower than that of those older preachers, whose weekly sermons represented a degree of labour and often of erudition, which move the wonder of their degenerate successors, and seem to rebuke their frivolity. "The ministry of the word" was to the preachers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an awful and exacting service, into which they poured their learning and zeal, and

by which they conceived themselves to justify their sublime description as "the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." While thus the preacher himself is induced to belittle his most exalted function by the circumstance that his congregation takes a mean view of it, the congregation itself is altering for the worse. Only a preacher can estimate (and he rarely suspects) the effect of the congregation on the man who habitually addresses it from the pulpit. The development of "musical services" has brought to the churches many whose interest in religion is far more æsthetic than religious, to whom the music is more than the worship, and the organist a more important person than the preacher. Even within the ranks of the genuinely religious there is quickly formed a state of opinion very unfavourable to the highest estimate of the preacher's task, and it is scarcely excessive to say that, at the present time, the preacher will often be encouraged by his congregation to take a very poor conception of his office. In this connection it may be observed that the old reasons for giving a large place to music in church are hardly so strong as formerly, since the spread of musical education and the rapid extension of all forms of musical entertainment. It is no longer necessary to go to the churches for the best music, and therefore the place of music in the public services can be determined solely

with regard to religious considerations in the proper sense of the word. Worship threatens to degenerate into sensuous indulgence when the leading motive of the worshipper is found in his keen enjoyment of that element in the service which has no necessary or indeed natural connection with his conscience or his reason.

The change in the congregation is, perhaps, the key to the singular difficulty of modern preaching. In some obvious respects the change is for the better. Modern congregations are better educated and better mannered. They do not depend on the sermon for instruction in faith and morals in the same degree as did the ordinary congregations of the great preachers of former times. They rarely, if ever, manifest *publicly* their dislike of the preacher, or their disapprobation of his doctrine. Against this improvement, however, there are to be set some rather grave facts. The modern congregation is in some respects inferior to its predecessors. Thus there is a consensus of opinion on the point of the general ignorance of the Bible which now exists, and which tends to increase. The preacher can no longer count on an allusion to even the leading episodes of Biblical history being understood, and his references must be quoted in full, and often guarded with explanations, if they are to be appreciated. Moreover, the modern con-

gregation, in spite of its superior education and deportment, is often intellectually inferior to the congregation of an earlier time. What the explanation of this circumstance may be it is not altogether easy to determine. There is some reason for suspecting that the comparison is really between different classes of the population. The educated class no longer goes to church, at least to the extent which was the case in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The ordinary congregations of to-day are drawn from classes which then were too far below the level of education to criticize the sermons which they heard. Something must certainly be allowed for the injurious effect of popular literature and journalism. When it is remembered that probably the only reading, which sustains the habit of intellectual activity in the majority of church-goers, is that represented by the cheaper newspapers and the fashionable novel, and that even the more thoughtful are commonly limited to the study of reviews and magazines, it will be no matter for astonishment that anything like a connected argument or a serious discussion in a sermon is in many churches resented, and described as "above the heads" of the congregation. Then the modern urban congregation is increasingly "occasional." The preacher can rarely count on having the same individuals regularly as his hearers. In the more fashionable districts there are loud

lamentations from the clergy as to the "week-ending" habit, which empties their churches through great part of the year. Even in the poorer parishes there is an increasing mobility of social habit, which tells badly on many things, notably on the sermon. Continuous teaching is rendered impossible; the preacher is reduced to the single sermon. He is, moreover, handicapped by the mutual ignorance of himself and his congregation. He cannot be helped by their criticisms of his preaching, for they are not sufficiently regular hearers to acquire the right to criticize; they cannot be helped by that personal knowledge of the teacher, which can only grow out of regular audience. Thus the modern preacher is always exposed to great risks of being misunderstood, and, if he be placed in a situation which attracts public notice, to be misrepresented. A regular congregation gets to know their minister's idiosyncrasies of thought and expression, and they can make the personal equation when he speaks in terms which to strangers would be either unintelligible or startling; but the occasional auditor has nothing but the words which fall on his ears to judge by when he listens to preaching which may surprise and even alarm him. This circumstance goes far to explain the extraordinary contrast which often exists between the public estimate of a preacher and the estimate of him which is

formed by his regular hearers. The more strongly marked is the preacher's individuality the more does he need that the personal equation should be made whenever judgment is passed on his utterances.

The diminished importance of the sermon, it may be said, does but indicate the decline of religion, which is everywhere taking place in the modern world. It would be truer to say that the preacher has been stripped of functions which had no essential connection with his duty, and that he now finds himself able to command a greatly restricted range of popular interest. The sermon once served all the purposes of the party newspaper, the monthly review, the theological book, as well as that of spiritual teaching and moral exhortation. The pulpit was the recognized arena of religious and political conflict; its influence on life was direct, powerful, and too often wholly non-spiritual. Government had to seek its aid and disarm its hostility. Politicians had to propitiate and reward preachers. Probably most men are now agreed that whatever excuses for this secularizing of the pulpit may once have existed, there is little to be said now for political sermons; but in spite of this theoretical agreement, political sermons are not yet extinct, and indeed show some signs of becoming again common.

Here again the influence of the congregations

on the preachers is very obvious, and precisely for this reason, viz. their greater dependence on their congregations, political preaching is more common and more unflinching among the Nonconformists than among the clergy of the national Church. What was called in the seventeenth century "preaching to the times" is very acceptable to many, perhaps to most, churchgoers, and any preacher, who is willing to give expression to the prevailing sentiment of the hour, may count on a large and freely-expressed approbation. There is no reason for thinking, however, that sermons which run counter to the views of the congregations have much influence, for almost our whole experience of political sermons exhibits the preacher as the forcible exponent of a prevailing sentiment, never or scarcely ever as its faithful critic. A comparatively harmless variety of political sermon is widely recognized as proper on "special" Sundays, that is, Sundays which have been allocated by some more or less representative, though entirely self-appointed, authority to specific subjects. Thus a new nomenclature is being attached to the year, and threatens to supersede the time-honoured and religiously valuable arrangement of the Christian calendar. The newspapers refer to "Peace Sunday," or "Temperance Sunday," or "Citizen Sunday," or "Labour Sunday," or "National Church Sunday" as if these were legal descriptions, and it needs

no argument to show how readily they may be linked to the service of some partisan propaganda. In the same direction tend those extremely popular demonstrations known as "Church Parades," in which the preaching inevitably forms part of the general design of corporate self-advertisement.

The natural tendency to bring party politics into the pulpit has been reinforced by the widely-extended impression that Christianity ought to exhibit its divine character primarily as a reforming force in society. It is sufficiently manifest that this impression has its roots in convictions which lie near the heart of discipleship, and draws its sustenance from very honourable elements of human nature. Nevertheless it is not a satisfactory account of Christianity to represent it as primarily concerned with the reorganizing of terrestrial conditions, and if social reform should become frankly political in the partisan sense, it is clear that the confusion between religion and politics, which is the very spirit of fanaticism, will be particularly easy in connection with the advocacy of such projects of social change as both commend themselves to the individual preacher, and are "planks" in the "platform" of his political party. In effect this is precisely what has happened. The righteous indignation against manifest social abuses, which every honest man feels, and every Christian perforce confesses, is subtly identified with the less

disinterested ardour which the political partisan cherishes for the triumph of his party at the polls. Inevitably, though without conscious design, the pulpit is merged in the party organization, and the preacher sinks into a political agent. That this is no exaggerated description of a familiar phenomenon no cool observer of English life will dispute.

That the taint of partisanship in preaching goes far towards a complete destruction of its spiritual effect can hardly be questioned, for in the case of those whose party objects are served thereby, the sermon clearly brings no wholesome restraint on the besetting sins of partisans, and in the case of those who are offended by an attack on themselves, it raises a resentment which will bar the entrance of any more edifying emotion. The atmosphere of fraternal love and personal humility which belongs to Christian worship is exchanged for the fierce and loveless enthusiasm which is natural to a political meeting, and in spite of the sacred phrases in which the political fervour of the congregation finds expression, it is hard to see what spiritual effect can be looked for from its indulgence. These are propositions of universal application, yet they have a directer reference to the case of the preaching of a national clergy.

The non-established Churches are voluntary societies, and it is a fair presumption that, however defective their system may on other

grounds appear, it reflects the will of those for whose sake it exists. In any case no outsider has any right to object to proceedings with which he is not required to associate himself. The case of an established national Church is widely different. It is the suggestion of history and the specific assumption of law that every Englishman is a member of the Church of England, and although neither history nor law will bear him out in any violation of that Church's system, yet both authorize him to seek as of right the free and full religious service provided in its system. The religious endowments of the nation are vested in the Church of England as the exponent of national Christianity, and if ever the Church of England were to become, so far as the official ministrations of its clergy are concerned, the creature of a political party, it would forfeit any moral right to possess either the prestige or the property of a national Church. In the main it has been the case hitherto, at least since the panic induced by the long French wars has subsided, that the English clergy, although perhaps naturally Conservative in sentiment and conviction, have abstained, often in the teeth of very gross provocation, from giving a partisan colour to their preaching. Such exceptions as there have been to this honourable abstinence have certainly not been restricted to the representatives of one political party, but there can be little doubt that in every

case the religious influence of the preaching has suffered, and the proper weight of a spiritual teacher has been exchanged for the very different consideration of a prominent partisan.

St. Margaret's, Westminster, has for three centuries enjoyed the notable distinction of being the official church of the House of Commons. One of the indications of a waxing consciousness of importance, manifested by the popular branch of the Legislature in the seventeenth century, was a reluctance to accompany the Sovereign and the Peers to the Abbey for corporate worship, and this reluctance connected itself with that divergence of religious sentiment between the Stuart sovereigns and the nation, which contributed to the history of that age its most tragic features. In St. Margaret's the House of Commons could make sure of a ceremonial which matched the strong Protestant sympathies of the members; there also they could inaugurate that unhappy device of purging the House of Papists by a compulsory reception of the Holy Communion. The famous Test Act of the Restoration epoch did but make statutory and general what had been the self-imposed practice of the early seventeenth-century House. The connection between the House and St. Margaret's has occasioned the preaching, and publication "by authority," of numerous sermons, which have a certain historical interest, as expressing the fears and hopes

of their time. Intensely political these official sermons certainly were, but before the rise of parties political preaching never lost the grand manner of a national act. It may not, however, be denied that the religious worth of these Parliamentary sermons suffered by the fierce political passion which too often inspired their composition, and it would not be a very extravagant proposition, that the abiding interest of these older discourses varies with their abstinence from current politics. It has been the practice of the present rector to mark the first Sunday of the Parliamentary Session by preaching a sermon, which in an innocent sense might be called political, as dealing primarily with the civic applications of religion, and pressing these on a congregation which includes a certain number of Members of Parliament. Of these sermons three are included in this volume, and will serve to illustrate what has been said of political preaching.

Controversial preaching in the older sense is generally, and wisely, abandoned by most modern preachers. It is apparent to everybody that fair debate of controverted questions is not possible when but one of the parties is heard, and since the somewhat exaggerated sense of decorum will no longer tolerate interruption of the preacher, or such public discussions in the churches as were popular in an earlier age, the controversial sermon cannot secure such a

measure of public attention as alone could make its composition worth the preacher's while. Preaching about subjects of controversy is of course inevitable, since few subjects of religious importance are not so to be described. The preacher's point of view is, however, presumably well known, and his theological postulates are probably shared by his hearers, who, as matters now stand, will have chosen him of their own accord as a religious teacher. If it were a condition of charity to avoid giving offence, the Christian pulpit would be stricken with insincerity and futility; yet the Christian preacher, claiming his indispensable right to teach freely the truth as he is able to perceive it, is beyond others bound to cultivate the spirit of fairness and discrimination.

The reader of these sermons is asked to remember that they were preached on special occasions, and before exceptional congregations. They must not be taken as illustrations of what the preacher would consider the proper type of parochial preaching. St. Margaret's is still, indeed, in name a parish church, but hardly in more than name. The resident population has largely disappeared, and most part of the buildings are now public and private offices, inhabited by a few caretakers. In parochial circumstance the older and more famous part of Westminster tends to become as the City of London. As a preaching centre, however, the

importance of St. Margaret's continues, and even grows greater, for the increasing mobility of life renders the gathering of congregations easier, and the quickened sense of historic interest brings to Westminster in ever greater numbers tourists from every part of the English-speaking world. The sermons preached in St. Margaret's are listened to by strangers from far and near, and the preacher must console himself for the loss of parochial sympathies and interests by the consideration that he is called to sustain the witness of Christianity before the nation itself. This circumstance cannot but impress itself on the preaching, and give it a definite aspect.

I

THE CRISIS OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."—Isaiah lxv. 8.

1. DISESTABLISHMENT is in the air. Across the Channel our neighbours have made an end of the Concordat which for a century past has bound the State to a formal recognition of Christianity, and those who recognize the curious intimacy between the political course in France and events in England can hardly fail to draw an inference which on other grounds seems probable enough. Two extensive and humiliating controversies have within the last few years worked a great and sinister change in the sentiment of the nation with respect to the national Church. The educational conflict and the agitation against ritualism have had the effect of stimulating opposition to the Church of England among the Nonconformists, and alienating the affection of large numbers of Churchmen; so that it is matter of common observation that the project of Disestablishment

which, a decade ago, seemed altogether chimerical has now re-entered the sphere of political probabilities, and is being generally discussed as a matter on the boundary, if not within the region, of practical politics. I have made no secret of my conviction that the highest interests of the English nation are bound up with the maintenance of the Church of England as an Established Church, but I do not doubt that the Church of England will be disestablished, and will deserve to be disestablished, if the present situation is acquiesced in and continued indefinitely. So deeply important do I hold this matter to be, that I shall not scruple to claim your close attention to a sermon entirely devoted to the present state of the national Church. In this pulpit I have often spoken anxiously of the "*signs of the times*," which, in our own age, as in the age of the Reformation, are portending great religious changes. Now I draw the argument to its specific application to the Church of England, and ask you, calmly and responsibly, as "sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons" of that Church, to consider the position in which we now stand.

2. Let it be noted that it is by no means the case, as too often men take for granted, that the circumstances of our time are altogether hostile to Establishment, that in truth an Established Church is an anomaly, an interesting survival, all but a lifeless relic. I hold that the precise

contrary would be nearer to the truth. Three circumstances of our time, at least, are hostile to the policy of Disestablishment. In the first place, it is certain that those exalted doctrines of Divine Right as inhering in hierarchies, which in the past have compelled the conflict of Church and State, are stricken for death. Historical science has confirmed the suspicions of common-sense, and allowed the resentments of the Christian conscience, by decisively prohibiting the postulates on which Divine Rights—papal, episcopal, presbyterian, congregational—must be built. Certain it is that Christ never bound any organization upon His Church, that His apostles left the Churches they founded diversely organized, that every existing Church order has to plead the same historical excuses for itself, and justify such apostolic lineage as it may claim by the elastic and many-sided argument of ecclesiastical development. When we recall the long and embittered conflicts between Church and State which have in the past turned on the point of inherent Divine Right alleged for some specific organization of the Christian ministry, we can see at once how great an obstacle to those harmonious relations of the civil and the ecclesiastical powers, which are vital to a vigorous Establishment, is taken out of the way, when this obstinate fiction of hierarchical vanity is banished from the political arena. I know well enough that the most lofty

claims survive in the pages of ecclesiastical journals, and linger on the lips of partisans, but they receive from the men of our time only the decent toleration which is readily conceded to all harmless vagaries of opinion, not the serious attention which is bestowed on recognized truths. In the second place, we have all accepted a loftier notion of the State than was common two generations ago. We no longer think that the functions of the State are satisfactorily fulfilled when order is maintained and national security guaranteed. We are all Socialists now, it has been said, with obvious exaggeration, but also with obvious truth. Every year adds to the functions of the State, as fresh needs are developed by our crowded and perplexing urban life, and it is seen that so great is the scale of those needs, that only by combined action, that is, the action of the State, can they be in any satisfactory measure provided for. The notion that there is something unnatural, if not actually wrong, in the religious action of the State now finds no countenance save among the rapidly-dwindling number of rigorous Independents. The unnatural thing is seen to be such an arbitrary limitation of State action as would defraud the citizens of the highest service the State can render. When the State is required to guard the health, train the minds, provide for the amusement of the citizens, it is impossible not to allow the logical

propriety of the old Christian notion that, saving always the indefeasible rights of the private conscience, the State is bound also to take thought for their morals and religious belief. In the third place, we have generally come to a keener perception of the mischiefs of what is called "clericalism" than was possible to a former generation. We have learned by bitter experience, what our grandfathers would not have believed possible, that a free democracy can be priest-ridden just as completely as a monarchy, and far more disastrously; and we know that there is, in the fact of Establishment, an antidote to the disease of clericalism which no prudent statesman would lightly resign, and which no free community can safely relinquish. Thus it is the case that, for many cogent reasons, the notion of an Established Church commends itself to the serious political thought of our time.

3. While all this is true, it must be said on the other side that we are all tending to agreement in respect of the conditions which must be satisfied in any Establishment, which is religiously effective and politically defensible. These are at least two. A national Church, receiving the countenance and support of the State as such, must really include the Christianity of the nation in such measure as to be the apparent and efficient organ of the general Christian sentiment and conscience. That is

the first condition of valid Establishment. A national Church, moreover, must be able to commend its teaching and work to the approval of the higher intelligence of the nation. The familiar arrangement, which allots to the Archbishop of Canterbury official precedence over all subjects not of royal blood, implies a theory which in its rightful applications is profoundly reasonable. The Church, impersonated by its Primate, represents the highest aspect of the national life. Theology is properly described as the science of sciences, for it is only when they pass beyond themselves into the region of spiritual truth that all the separate sciences are correlated and justified. Therefore it cannot be properly tolerable that between theology and the sciences there should be discrepancy, or even contradiction and strife. There is an inner harmony of truth which must reveal itself wherever any element of truth is found, and—in spite of the occasional intrusion of pseudo-scientific and pseudo-religious theories, which are truly inconsistent with this natural harmony—it cannot but be the case that science and Christianity are fundamentally harmonious, for science is, if indeed it be science, true, and Christianity is, in the last analysis, simply identical with the truth. This, then, is the second condition of valid Establishment. The higher intelligence of the community must approve the teaching and work of the Church.

4. Can it fairly be said with respect to the Church of England that these two conditions are satisfied? The first is notoriously not so: for it is matter of common knowledge that large numbers of professed Christians, forming, perhaps, half the Christians in the country, do stand outside the fellowship of the national Church. Lamentable as this is, we do not realize its whole gravity until we remember that the alienation is not merely denominational, such, for example, as that which divides one Nonconformist body from another, but is, in the avowed belief of many of the Anglican clergy, a spiritual cleavage of the utmost importance. The national Church has thus come within reach of the loss of its representative character: it is ceasing to be national, because the clergy are ceasing to be Protestant. What shall we say of the second condition? Is the Church of England able to retain the adherence of the thoughtful and educated laity? I shall not think it necessary to answer this question at length. In common with every other Christian Church, the Church of England has to face the difficulties inherent in an age of transition, and of these perhaps the most considerable is the apparent and increasing discrepancy between knowledge and the current belief. So far our defects are not blameworthy; but the grave question for us to consider is this: What action is the Church of England taking with

respect to the characteristic and urgent demand of our time? What is the attitude of the bishops, of the convocations, of the scholars, of the clergy? What is the temper of the Anglican laity? Now it would be the extreme of injustice to deny that there are many evidences among us of a frank and manly disposition, many signs of that genuinely Christian spirit which is ready to learn, prepared to unlearn (which is a harder thing still), so sure of the inherent truth of Christ's religion as to keep a brave heart and an open mind in the midst of the dismaying changes of a changing age. Wise and comforting words have fallen from some of our bishops, and by our leading scholars in the universities, books are not infrequently put forth, which handle the difficult problems now in debate with that courageous honesty and unfailing reverence, which are the pledges of spiritual insight. While, however, we recognize these elements of hope, can we avoid a grave anxiety when we take account of other facts, perhaps even more significant? Two questions are now in the forefront of religious politics throughout Christendom, and no Church—least of all the Church of a free, civilized, and progressing nation—can avoid the necessity of answering them. The first touches the Bible; the last touches what is called clerical subscription, and includes the treatment of creeds and

formularies. It needs no saying in an assembly of thoughtful Christians that these are matters of the utmost importance. They cut very deeply into the Christian system, and more or less directly they determine the whole attitude of the Church towards human progress. Moreover, while they are matters of extreme gravity and complexity, they enter necessarily into the view of the plain and unlearned folk, who yet know enough to perceive the broad issues at stake. Will you accept the conclusions of literary criticism as applied frankly to the Christian documents? Will you take account of the changes which have passed over men's thinking since the Christian Creeds were compiled? Will you recognize a latitude of interpretation in the subscribing of formularies, inspired by other needs and determined by other designs than those of our time? Will you encourage, and not embarrass or even prohibit, the efforts of those serious and learned theologians (who yet linger in the Church of England) who feel themselves divinely called to the arduous yet imperative duty of restating old truth in terms intelligible to modern thinkers? These are questions which we all must face in due time; first, the responsible rulers of the Church; then the leaders of religious opinion; finally, the rank and file of Churchmen. We know how the Church of Rome is answering them. That Bourbon among the Churches has learned

nothing and forgotten nothing, and remains still as ever the unsleeping and immitigable foe of religious liberty. We know how many of our own Church—bishops, clergy, laity—would answer them; and only the salutary impotence with which the law of England has stricken the sword-arm of ecclesiastical intolerance hinders the same course in England as in France. The attitude of the Church of England is not yet determined, and hence, for all who understand the extraordinary importance of the issues at stake, the extreme interest of this time. We all can take a part in fixing that attitude, in deciding whether the Church of England shall proceed in the path of salutary change which, at an earlier transition time, the Reformers chose, or whether it will fall back from that courageous precedent, and revert to the repressive and retrograde policy of Rome.

5. If such be the situation in which we now stand, it would seem that two things are indispensable, if the national character of the Church of England is to be recovered, and Establishment justified to the reason and the conscience of our nation. To the one I have already adverted. We must have faith enough and courage enough to follow out the grand principle of our Reformation, and once more, as in the sixteenth century, conform the doctrine and discipline of our Church to the accumulated

knowledge of our time. Not to do this implies ecclesiastical suicide, "breaking for ever with the intellectual progress of Europe," as Mark Pattison said of the earlier crisis. The other is not less urgent. We must succeed in bridging the chasm which parts the Church of England from the non-Episcopalian Churches, so that once more there shall be an effective unity of Christian sentiment within the nation, and by representation the Established Church shall be in fact, what it always has been in theory, the exponent of the national Christianity. At this moment, perhaps, when the angry recriminations of the educational controversy are hanging in the air, it may seem a futile and hopeless project to propose, but in truth the forces making for harmony are neither few nor weak. On both sides they have been active. Both Anglicans and Nonconformists are now learning theology from the same teachers, reading the same books, applying to the Bible the same principles of interpretation, using the same devotions, singing the same hymns. They are on the very point of frankly confessing fraternity by the covenant of inter-communion, and by the interchange of pulpits. What holds them back but dying traditions and living prejudices? The serious men on both sides are seeing, and even finding courage to confess, that for the restraint and removal of the distinctive defects of both sides, this union is the one thing needful.

The zeal and enthusiasm of Nonconformity is discredited and in great part paralyzed by a miserable amount of self-advertisement, and unhealthy emotionalism, and political partisanship; unite that zeal and enthusiasm with the traditional reverence of Anglican worship, the restraining disciplines of an ancient and ordered system, and they become higher and more spiritually effective factors in our religious life. The reverence and restraint of an old Established Church, could we but link them to Nonconformist zeal and enthusiasm, would lose their parasitic accompaniments of deadness and formalism. But, so long as the Church of England refuses the fellowship of the non-Episcopalian Churches, denies the calling of their ministers, throws doubt on the validity of their sacraments, brands their ministrations as schismatic, so long, I say, the Church of England cuts herself off from the deeper Christian sentiment of the nation and becomes plainly disqualified for her historic function as the national Church, and remains without effectual apology for national establishment.

> "We feel, indeed, ashamed"—so runs a leading article in a recent issue of the most justly-respected organ of English lay opinion—"that a lay paper like the *Spectator*, a paper the conductors of which do not profess to be theologians in any shape, but only politicians, should have to

> defend the Bible and simple Bible teaching against even a temporary aberration on the part of the leaders of the Church of England, leaders whose business it should be to guard Bible Christianity from attack and not to discredit it. We can, of course, understand the Roman attitude towards the Bible and Bible teaching, for the Roman authorities have always regarded the Bible as a dangerous book when not interpreted by the Church; but if this distrust of the Bible were unhappily to become, even in appearance only, the attitude of the national Church, then all hope of preventing Disestablishment would be over."

I will make no comment on these remarkable words except to say that they seem to me equally just, timely, and humiliating.

6. "*Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.*" I have borrowed from the Book of Isaiah this proverb of patience and hope, which the prophet applied to his nation at a time of grievous depression. "*Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for My servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of My mountains: and My chosen shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there.*" I would

venture to adopt the words of the prophet in an appeal to the English people. This Church of England, when all is said that ought in justice to be said of failures and blunders in the past and in the present, embodies the noblest ideals of our race, and is rich in almost infinite potencies of good. "*Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.*" It is, I think, even now—I am sure it has been in the past—the most tolerant of all Churches ; it is, I believe, by its history and the circumstances of its life, the most teachable of Churches. Its faults are not beyond remedy : its virtues are beyond price. "*Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.*" And here I would venture to address myself to those within the Church of England who are called, and who call themselves, Evangelicals. They, beyond other Anglicans, seem to be charged with responsibility at the present time. They are in accord with the Protestant feeling of the nation ; they are in sympathy with that conception of Christianity which most commends itself to non-Episcopalians. So far they would seem designated to form the instrument by which the evangelical sentiment of English people should be reconciled to the Church. Moreover, they are, beyond others, committed to the study, the defence, and the exaltation of the Bible : therefore upon them in primary degree rests the obligation to be rigorously honest in their treatment of Scripture. They,

at least, must face frankly the questions raised by Biblical criticism on the one hand, and the sacerdotalist crusade on the other, and their whole worth as an element in the life of the Christian society depends on their competence to handle rightly the present crisis. I respectfully suggest to them that they are designated to be the instrument by which the new truths of criticism shall be assimilated by the Church of England with the least possible shock to piety. They have it in their power to disprove and disallow the sacerdotalist contention that the Church of England dislikes and dreads Biblical teaching as the basis of education. I would pray the evangelical party to seek from the fathers of the Reformation the example of courageous departure from precedent, rather than precedents to be slavishly followed. Evangelicals, looking round on their own unique opportunities, might rise above the narrow views and bitter prejudices which have too often discredited them in the past, and which have brought them to-day into the singular situation of being the most numerous, and withal the least influential and the least respected, party in the national Church, and they might adopt as the confession of their own vocation and the programme of their own practical course the manly words of St. Paul: "*Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy we faint not: but we*

have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully: but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

II

THE RELIGIOUS REUNION OF THE NATION

(BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH DELIVERED AT WHITEFIELD'S)

I HAVE accepted Mr. Silvester Horne's invitation to speak to you this afternoon with much appreciation of its kindness, and a profound sense of the difficulty of the task to which it calls me. For who does not know that too often, more often than not, the advocacy of ecclesiastical harmony has degenerated into a veiled, but none the less mischievous, contribution to the religious strife? I shall endeavour this afternoon to avoid this danger, and to steer a middle course between the opposite dangers of vagueness and partisanship. I would not have come here at all if I were not persuaded that the request, which was made to me by your minister, represented a genuine desire to escape from the situation of sustained uncharity, which now exists between the organized sections of the Christian Church in this country, and a willingness honestly to face the terms and conditions of such an escape.

Let me, first, attempt to describe the mischiefs of the present state of affairs; then, I propose to inquire whether there is any proper necessity for the continuance of that state; finally, I shall take leave to address an appeal to you to do what lies in your power to co-operate with the forces making for harmony, rather than with those which make for sharper division.

1. We shall all admit that the Christian Church exists in the world for two great purposes. On the one hand, it is the divinely-ordained instrument for the setting up on earth of Christ's kingdom of righteousness; on the other hand, it is the divinely-ordained means for training individual character, for the making of saints. These two functions obviously run into one another; yet they may be conveniently distinguished. The one is evangelistic, the other disciplinary; the one Catholic, the other domestic. I propose to show that a state of chronic and embittered division goes far to disable the Church in both particulars. Alike as an instrument for the world's conversion and as the school of Christian character, the reign of sectarianism is paralyzing. It is, I apprehend, no unnecessary or superfluous thing to dwell on this point, for there has grown up among us a manner of speaking with respect to religious divisions, which seems to regard them with something more than tolerance. The familiar language of economics is borrowed and

misapplied. Competition, which is commonly regarded as the principle of efficiency in the sphere of commerce, is supposed to have a true counterpart in sectarian rivalry, and, it is suggested, is there also a principle of efficiency. The strife of sects, like the strife of tradesmen, strikes out of the running the least deserving, and secures the "survival of the fittest."

Perhaps the analogy with competitive industrialism is not so attractive at the start of the twentieth century as it was in the middle of the nineteenth. We are beginning to suspect that, even in commercial affairs, competition, unchecked and universal, is not quite so satisfactory a principle as was once supposed; and there is an insistent demand that efficiency shall be reckoned on some more satisfying basis than that which is capable of final statement in the returns of the Board of Trade. Still, long-familiar ideas and phrases die hard; and I am sure that it is still the case, that many of those ardent sectarians, who may be called the "business men of the Churches," are, consciously or unconsciously, swayed in their religious thinking by their economic theories. Secular politicians, and they are many in these days, regard the strife of the Churches as the best protection against that dominance of the ecclesiastical spirit which they associate, and have but too good reason for associating, with intolerance and superstition. They appeal to

history, and claim that the weakening of the Church of Christ by its divisions has advanced *pari passu* with the spread of humane notions of government, respect for the individual conscience, and the disappearance of ignorance and fanaticism. I admit frankly the plausibility of such a view, and if I cannot allow its soundness, I will not dispute that it has large justifications. Thus, then, it has come about that, whether by the subtle invasion of economic notions, or by the apparent suggestions of history, many men are at the present time disposed to look with something like approbation on the sectarian divisions of the Christian family. It is, therefore, imperative that I should make clear the mischiefs which flow from the situation of acute division which now prevails. Take, first, the effect of sectarianism on the evangelistic work of the Church. Here, if anywhere, the benefits of division would be apparent ; for, certainly, there is an open door secured for individual enthusiasm, and the stimulus of a rivalry which may be as honourable as it is keen. But can any serious observer of contemporary life deny that the consequences of our unhappy divisions are by no means thus happily to be described ? Is it not the case that the divine claim of Christ's religion has been generally obscured, and its essential character very largely ignored ? How can men recognize the religion of

humanity, that is, the religion which is in such sense true that it, and it alone, truly answers to the religious needs of man as such, and therefore can claim by right divine the acceptance of every self-respecting man, in something which is manifestly and avowedly monopolized by classes and descriptions of men, and held in such wise that they refuse fellowship with all others, albeit they also claim the Christian name? Moreover, when the non-Christian public is forced continually to listen to the fierce recriminations of the sects, to mark their passionate insistence on sectarian dogmas or systems of discipline, to see the relative importance which they attach to these things as compared with those "more excellent" moral and spiritual dispositions, which the human conscience perforce reveres, how can the essential character of Christ's religion be perceived? Is it, then, the case, they ask with surprise, that Christianity is not properly a religion at all, since there are no common terms of belief or of fellowship which Christians admit, and since the one thing, which all are agreed to repudiate, is the duty of visible and operative fraternity?

Can it be any longer a matter for astonishment that Christianity should be spoken about as if it were merely one of the numerous interests which engage men's leisure, an excellent hobby, like music or painting, not any

more a divine evangel gathering into itself whatever is morally sound in all human interests, and lifting men on to a higher plane than that of conventional life? You will remember that our Lord, when, on the eve of His passion, He prayed for the oneness of His disciples in the coming time, specifically connected the answer of His prayer with the success of His Church in the great work of spiritual witness.

> "*Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.*"

I believe we ought seriously to reflect on the grave hindrance to religion which arises from the mere fact that the religion of Christ is presented to men in such wise, and under such conditions, that it is enormously difficult for them to appreciate its true character and its divine authority.

Take, next, the effect of sectarianism on the domestic life of the Churches. Can it be denied by any one who knows the inner life of any denomination, that the standard of Christian excellence is perverted and lowered by the state of chronic warfare in which the denominations are living? Who are the men who rise

to principal influence in the Churches? Are they the morally best, or the controversially ablest? What is most honoured by the Churches—wealth, political ability, popular gifts, or goodness, self-sacrifice, sacred learning, a severe and lofty independence? I do but ask these questions; you will yourselves take thought for the answers. Apart, however, from all considerations of this kind, I would pray you to reflect on the fact that our existing divisions have a curiously intimate connection with divisions of another kind, which are properly irrelevant. Roughly, the denominations correspond with the several classes of the people. I have often wished that we could have a census of the congregations throughout the country distributed according to employments. I believe we should be amazed to find how close is the relation between sects and classes, proving surely this: that the distinctive dogmas and systems are, to a great extent, but the expression, in terms of religion, of the distinctive idiosyncrasies of classes and employments. There are many and mingled inferences which may be drawn from this circumstance, and I am far from maintaining that they are altogether unfavourable; but surely this cannot be denied, that a fresh and formidable element of moral risk has entered the Church, when its disciplinary task has to be fulfilled in an atmosphere dominated by the habits and aspirations

of any single class or employment. It could hardly fail to be the case, that the true proportions of the Christian ideal are perilously obscured, that a lop-sided version of Christian duty is adopted within the sect, and that a consecration is bestowed on tendencies and ambitions which have nothing to do with Christianity. It is surely hardly less evident that the most effectual corrective of this narrow conception of discipleship which we can imagine, would be the establishment of a close and constant association in religious fellowship with other sects, or, rather, the suppression among the members of all sects of the false and partial conception of Christianity by the putting into practice of a larger and more generous view.

Let me, before leaving this matter, add two observations. In this country, owing to the long-established habits of political conflict, we are all peculiarly tempted to let our political preferences enter into our religious witness. Do not misunderstand me. I do not question—on the contrary, I would insist on—the legitimacy, nay, the necessity, of bringing every part of our conduct under the control of our religious convictions; but I do mean that we ought to "make the personal equation" in our own case, and be very clear that, when we are speaking in the awful Name of the "One Lord," we are not really giving utterance to opinions and preferences which come, not from

His Gospel, but from the lower and perhaps nearer source of partisan politics. In any case, I ask you to reflect on the circumstance that the traditional parties of English politics do in the main correspond with the two great divisions of English religion; and I suggest to you that from that circumstance there does proceed a distinctive and purely non-religious element making for division. My argument is, it hardly needs saying, strictly impartial. I would entreat my fellow-Churchman to ask himself, when he determines his attitude on religious issues which are dividing the nation, How far am I influenced by the fact that I am politically a Conservative? And I will take leave to entreat those, whom I must describe as Nonconformists, to address to themselves a kindred inquiry, How far am I influenced by the fact that I am politically a Liberal? It may, of course, happen in both cases, that even so the final decision will be the same; but I am very sure that the mere keeping the reality of the danger of partisanship in view would have a moderating influence on the manner of advocating political opinions. I do not think it worth my while to consider the case of those perfected partisans who practically identify their own party with the Church of Christ, for I am very sure that your kind invitation to me, and your courteous attention, show that you are at one with me in disallowing that extremity

of sectarianism. The other observation is this: Christian history certifies a very intimate connection between controversy and a low standard of morals. Why should that be the case? Is it not because controversy turns away men's attention from greater things, disturbs their sense of religious proportion, and dissipates their interest over intrinsically unworthy objects? If it be the case, and it is hard to deny that it is, that Christianity is strangely inadequate to its own theory, that the moral standard of the professedly Christian classes is extraordinarily unsatisfactory, that the apathy of religious men to grave moral scandals is truly humiliating, may it not be that the explanation lies in the circumstance that the Christian conscience is darkened and confused by conflict, and that the resources of the Christian spirit are being wasted on domestic objects, unworthy at best? I submit to you that, whether we consider the duty of the Church towards the world which it is sent to evangelize, or towards its own members whom it is charged to discipline, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the gravest mischiefs do proceed from the state of chronic division and uncharity in which we are living.

2. I pass on to my next point, and inquire whether there is any proper necessity for the continuance of the present state of things. You know that I personally am persuaded that no

such necessity exists, that it is possible, it is within the range of practical proposals, that a great improvement of the present situation could be effected without the sacrifice of any genuine convictions, though at the cost of a vast mass of prejudices and some sacrifice of material interests. Let me indicate very shortly the reasons why I am to that extent an optimist. I will but name four.

1. We no longer seriously defend the old causes of separation, since history and criticism have explained, and, by explaining, disallowed them.

2. The rise of the working classes to political power has perforce shaken us out of our denominational complacency, and compelled us to consider Christianity from a new point of view.

3. While we have lost belief in the older conception of the Church, we have realized as never before both the supremacy and the indispensableness of Christianity.

4. We are moved in conscience, and in spite of ourselves brought together, by the immense missionary opportunities which the rapid spread of empire has created.

Let us consider these propositions severally.

1. If you will be at the pains to read the history of religious separations, you will be astonished to find how rarely the original reasons retain validity at the present time. There is, indeed, one great and most important

exception to be made. The reasons which determined the disruption of the Western Church in the sixteenth century retain validity, and, as I see the facts, must always retain validity, so long as the fundamental facts of human nature and society remain unaltered. It is no doubt the case that the leaders of the great revolt against the medieval system were men of their own time, and expressed themselves accordingly; that they hardly realized the significance of their own action, and could not foresee its consequences; but when they took their stand on the principle of private judgment against authority in matters of faith, and asserted the rights of the nation against an external and international power, they were adopting a platform which would not be abandoned, because it affirmed factors of human life which appear to be permanent. Their appeal to the Scripture as a final authority was really an appeal to the religion as more fundamental than the institutions, which utter it at any given time; and that appeal is abidingly valid. We have to choose to-day between the voice of Christ in the Scripture and that version of His revelation which the Churches of authority deliver. Accordingly, I have never concealed from myself that, before any man can usefully attempt any discussion of the practical questions of Christian reunion, he must settle it with himself whether he stands with the Reformation or

against it. I cannot myself perceive any difference in principle, though very great difference in manner and measure, between the attitude of the Vatican at this moment and the attitude of the Eastern Church, or that of the Tractarians in the English Church. All appear to me to deny the principles upon which the Reformation proceeded, and upon which alone it can be justified. The Church of England, as we know it, is, beyond all question, the creature of the Reformation; and this proposition carries no sort of denial that the pre-Reformation English Church stands in true historic and spiritual relation to its successor. The monarchy of the Plantagenets is not unrelated to the monarchy of the Guelphs, although it is the case that it stands on another principle, the principle of popular choice uttered in the Revolution, and specifically expressed in the Act of Settlement. I say here, what I have been constantly saying and defending in recent years, that only on the basis of the Reformation is any measure of religious reunion possible in this country. There is no doubt that, until the modern epoch, Christian minds were haunted by the notion of Divine Right inhering in some specific form of Church order. For obvious reasons the Reformers magnified not excessively (that could hardly be possible), but mistakenly, the authority of the Bible. The English Churchman thought that he found there a clear establish-

ment of his own system of a national Church, governed directly by the sovereign; the Presbyterian was equally confident that his system of presbyters and synods was there divinely ordained; the Congregationalist was not behind the rest in producing from the sacred pages what he held to be divine authority for his ecclesiastical arrangements. So with all the rest, from the Papacy down to the Levellers and Fifth Monarchy men. All held their own systems to be clearly commanded of God in the Scripture. History tells us a different story. The Bible proofs in every case followed the fact; and that had its origin in political or social circumstances. I must not elaborate the argument now, because in its main postulates it is generally accepted. No thoughtful or educated Christian in any Church now dreams of finding in the New Testament a clear divine and exclusive title for the ecclesiastical system which he prefers. We no longer think in that way. If this be the case, surely one great class of stumbling-blocks has been taken out of the way. All serious Christians believe that government in the Church is divine—not any specific frame of government. We have learned that the particular institutions by which government is carried on, whether papal, episcopal, presbyterian, congregational, were not ordained directly and in advance of Christian experience, but reflect the needs and idiosyncrasies of men.

The analogy between the State and the Church is in this particular complete. What has happened with respect to the systems of Church government has happened also with respect to the systems of Church doctrine. Theology not less than ecclesiastical politics is in perpetual flux, expressing the ever-renewed effort of religious philosophers to correlate the faith of the Gospel with the accumulations of knowledge. "Theories of Divine Right," observes Professor Pollard very justly, "whether of Churches, or States, or individuals, have happily failed to petrify human institutions, and have all given way to a divine law of progress. The one immutable factor in human affairs is their infinite mutability." Historical and Biblical criticism is a solvent of denominational principles which has affected all the Churches, and is destined to affect them more powerfully in the future. See its influence on the original causes of Nonconformity. Where is the educated Nonconformist who will subscribe the fierce denunciations of liturgical worship, of infant baptism, of episcopal (not episcopalian) government, of creeds, which fill the controversial works of his denominational ancestors? Who now even pretends to endorse the literal handling of the Scriptures, or the materialistic doctrines of the millennium, which in the past have given birth to religious systems which still linger among us? Let any man be at the

pains to set down the avowed pretexts for separation, and to consider them in the light of his actual beliefs and actions, and he will blush at the hypocrisy which continues to maintain divisions which have no longer any intelligible justifications.

2. The student of religious history will discover that few influences have been so powerful in the life of the Christian Church as that of class. The ecclesiastical system has ever reflected the sentiments and served the interests of the dominant class. The early Church was the tool of the imperial absolutism; the medieval Church received from contemporary feudalism its framework and much of its spirit; the Reformation was the triumph of the middle classes, and the ecclesiastical systems which it generated did for the most part express the fact. Now there are tokens of a change. The reign of the working classes is beginning, and among the first consequences of the triumph of the masses will be a great revolution in the region of ecclesiastical affairs. An altered emphasis in the teaching of Christianity is certain—nay, is already widely apparent. The former idols of Christian regard are quickly being displaced from their pedestals in the sanctuary. Not doctrine, or worship, or discipline, but a new social morality more advantageous to the multitude, is being clamoured for. In admitting the legitimacy of

the change we cannot ignore its immense risks. For the advent of democracy to supreme authority within modern society implies vastly greater dangers than the earlier revolutions which gave the sceptre to aristocracy and the middle class. It is no longer a section of the people, but almost the whole of them, which is concerned in the triumph of the working classes; and that means a twofold menace to civilization. To those who are forced to labour for their daily food, and whose necessary toil is too often brutalizing in itself, and carried on under conditions the least favourable in the world to the development of the higher faculties of human nature, it would seem inevitable that materialism would be peculiarly attractive and persuasive. There is, moreover, a power in numbers which renders the mistakes of a pure democracy far more serious than those of a monarch or a ruling class. The confusion of might and right is far more plausible, and far more difficult to expose. "It is bad to be oppressed by a minority," observed the late Lord Acton, "but it is worse to be oppressed by a majority. For there is a reserve of latent power in the masses which, if it is called into play, the minority can seldom resist." Accordingly, as the full significance of a reign of the working classes becomes apparent, a sense of common danger begins to draw the separated Churches together in defence of the threatened

interests of religion and morality. The spiritual nature of man, and the conviction of his immortality, the divine obligation of morality and its primary exercise within the family, the supreme social importance of sexual purity, and the indispensable belief in the final judgment of men—these fundamentals are clearly imperilled by the triumph of materialized democracy, and their faithful guardianship and constant proclamation are confessedly the principal tasks of the Christian society. Let but these spiritual interests be made secure and there is no reason why the triumph of the working classes should not bring with it a worthier understanding of the Christian religion than any which men have yet attained, and a long step forward towards the establishment of Christ's kingdom on the earth.

3. It is, moreover, deeply significant that, while we are rapidly losing belief in the older conception of the Church, we are realizing as never before both the supremacy and the indispensableness of Christ's religion. The essence of Christianity is ever more clearly perceived to be a genuine discipleship to Jesus Christ. Secularism, after a brief period of seeming triumph, is visibly bankrupt, for it manufactures appetite more quickly than the satisfactions of appetite, and cannot provide the moral qualities demanded for the working

of its ever more complex civilization. Chronic and reckless discontent and penury of character are the fatal marks of materialized modern society, and they presage the most fearful disasters which the human mind can conceive. The words of the apostle might seem to utter the appeal of the twentieth century to the Founder of Christianity—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." In a recent work Professor Bousset has borne striking testimony to the power of Christianity, and to the source of that power. "The question of the future of Christianity," he says, "is the question of the future of religion. For what we have learned in the course of our wanderings through the history of religion is precisely this fact, that the Christian religion is absolutely superior to all the other religions, and that Christianity represents the highest point which religious development has reached." And, again, he says, "If there is to be only one religion, it is Christianity which must be the religion of the progressive nations of the earth. From this point of view no other religion can be compared with it." He finds "the object and crown of the whole development" of religion in "the Gospel and Person of Jesus." He concludes with a moving appeal to the Lord. "And all this: God the Father, life in accordance with His will spent in joyful work for the service

of the world, forgiveness of sins and eternal hope—all this hangs together, and is crystallized in perfect clearness in the Person of our Lord Jesus. And we speak thus to Him, 'Thou art our Leader! There have been many leaders of men in different departments of life. Be Thou our Leader, with whom no other is comparable; the Leader to the highest, the Guide of our souls to God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'"

4. Education at home and the rapid expansion of empire abroad have combined to bring to the modern Church unexampled missionary opportunities, and the fact is telling for good on the life of the different denominations. Reunion is actually beginning in the missionary sphere, and on all hands there are signs of a new consciousness of the folly and sin implied in carrying into the work of evangelization the unmeaning separations and unintelligible quarrels of the European Churches. In presence of the heathen society the distinctiveness of Christianity is perceived, and the proportions of truth are restored.

You have invited me to speak of these things at a fitting time. Christmas, the festival of the Incarnation, brings into prominence the fundamental message of the Gospel—the love of God made manifest in the advent of His Son.

Reconciliation is the tradition of the

festival, which a kindly custom has clothed with tender domestic associations and richly freighted with social sympathies. Even hesitating and unemotional folk feel the strange, alluring power of the angelic hymn which echoes to-day throughout Christendom, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men." It is good for us to fill our minds with that ideal of worship and charity. If you really meant something more than an afternoon's amusement when you asked me to come here and speak of ecclesiastical harmony, then something more than your patient and generous attention is required. The measure of sincerity lies for every one of us in the answer we return to the question, What am I willing to give up of my preferences, even of what I honestly believe to be my rights, for the sake of peace between Christians? Generous talking, as Bishop Butler pointed out, is worse than useless if it bring in its train no correspondent action. The new year is filled with the omens of strife; will it find in us the advocates and exponents of reconciliation?

III

REUNION—A PLEA AND A REMONSTRANCE

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."—St. Matthew vii. 3–5.

It will be within the recollection of many of my hearers that a remarkable appeal to "all the Christian ministers of religion in England" was recently published, bearing the signatures of both the Anglican Archbishops, of both the Moderators of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and of the representative leaders of the principal non-Episcopalian Churches of this country. That appeal has been commended to the clergy of London by a circular letter from the Bishop of the diocese, in which the specific suggestion is made that they should "respond to it by preaching on Whit Sunday a sermon

upon our Lord's last prayer for unity among His followers, or some kindred subject." I have reflected long and anxiously over these documents, reluctant to disregard appeals so weighty in themselves, and signed by those whom one would not wittingly treat with any disrespect, and yet perplexed as to the possibility of any serviceable response at this juncture, when the relations of Christians towards one another appear to be more scandalously embittered than usual. My text will have told you that my resolution is taken to accept the Bishop's suggestion, and to preach on what he will not question is a "kindred subject" to Christian unity, the obligation which rests on English Churchmen to make sure that their own consciences are clean in the matter of "our unhappy divisions." For it cannot be denied that the situation in which this latest appeal for unity is made is extremely and painfully suggestive. Recall to mind our recent experience. The responsible Government of the country had proposed a scheme for settling what is well known as the "religious difficulty in the schools." The basis of their proposal was the reasonableness of the combination of Christian folk as such, in no narrower capacity, for the purpose of providing religious teaching to the children in the State schools. I have no observations to make on Mr. Birrell's scheme as a whole ; the pulpit is not the place for political

opinions, nor is Christian worship a fitting occasion for raising controverted and even exasperating questions; but the proposals for securing religious teaching in the State schools raised the very issue we are called upon now to consider. It is mere matter of fact that the Government Bill presupposed the reasonableness and the utility of a combination among Christian folk for the purpose of teaching children the simple elements of the Christian faith. How was that particular part of the Bill received by English Churchmen? I say nothing about the general policy of the Bill. There is no breach of Christian charity involved in the sharpest divergence of opinion as to the wisdom of unification, the method of effecting it, any and all of the details of a large and complicated measure; but this assumption of the Government that, for the purpose of teaching the elements of Christian faith and morality to children between the ages of five and fourteen, the Christian Churches might reasonably and usefully combine, stands on another footing. How was it received by many of the leaders of the English Church? How was it described and discussed by their Parliamentary spokesmen? It needs not that I should answer these questions. You all remember that the mere notion of such combination of Christians provoked a hurricane of denunciation, contempt, protest, invective; and you will not soon forget

that the loudest and most insistent voices in the clamour were those of the very Bishops who have now addressed to us the exhortation to preach about unity, and "to prepare our congregations for a united effort of prayer on Whit Sunday at the principal Morning Service for the reunion of Christians."

It might have been supposed that men who really held the opinions expressed in this appeal for Christian unity would have been quick to seize the opportunity of giving some practical expression to the mutual love they so ardently profess. Let me read the "assumptions" which, the signatories affirm, I hope with justice, "all Christians can make their own"—

> "*That our Lord meant us to be one in visible fellowship;*
>
> "*That our existing divisions hinder or even paralyze His work;*
>
> "*That we all deserve chastisement, and need penitence, for the various ways in which we have contributed to produce or promote division;*
>
> "*That we all need open and candid minds to receive light and yet more light, so that, in ways we perhaps as yet can hardly imagine, we may be led back towards unity.*"

There is one dangerously ambiguous word in this list of assumptions which I could wish were omitted. We are to pray that "*we may be led* back *towards unity.*" It may be that

nothing was intended by inserting that word, and that I should be faithfully expounding the sense of the phrase if I omitted it altogether or substituted what appears to me in all respects a more suitable word, and prayed *that we might be led, not* back, *but* forward *to unity*. For it is the case that the unity which once obtained in Christendom, and which was throughout the Western world broken up at the Reformation, was a unity which we could not rightly seek to restore. "The Reformers," observes Dr. Bigg, "stood for Freedom as against Compulsion. The imposing unity of the medieval Church was built upon force. You may think that a hard saying, yet it is strictly true. From the time of Theodosius the Great dissent had been a capital offence." If you ask how it came about that it ever appeared right in the eyes of Christian men to pass and maintain so monstrous a law, you will speedily discover that the reason lay in the conviction, generally held by Christians from the time of Cyprian, that Christ had imposed on the Church a divine government of bishops, priests, and deacons, and that no Christian could separate himself from that government without committing the deadly sin of schism. That doctrine of the Divine Right of a special form of Church order inspired the use of force in maintaining the external unity of the Church, and it survives into our milder days as authorizing those uncompromising ecclesias-

tical claims, which are the most obvious and the most obstinate of all the existing barriers to Christian fellowship. Are we to discern in the use of this phrase—"*we may be led* back *towards unity*"—a tacit approbation in the minds of some of the signatories of that theory of Christian unity which reigned in medieval and in primitive Christendom?

I think it cannot but strike the thoughtful observer of contemporary politics as full of melancholy suggestiveness, that opinions so just and so humble as those which I have read to you should yet coexist in the same minds with other opinions of a type which, whenever theory seems about to yield to practice, and the way opens for some effective approximation of Christian folk, assert their authority and sweep into the background all kindly sentiments. Why is it that this paralysis strikes the arm whenever the opportunity of fraternal action emerges? Let me give you an actual example, of which I heard much when I was in Scotland. Among the Episcopal signatories is the late justly-venerated Bishop of St. Andrews, the Primus of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. This excellent Bishop was deeply impressed with the sin and scandal of religious division, and not long since he arranged conferences with representatives of the national Church of Scotland, as well established as non-established, with a view to drawing closer the bonds of

fellowship. Everything went well enough until the desire was expressed that the good cause should be expedited by some public association in worship, some exchange of pulpits, some common reception of the sacrament of fraternity. Then emerged the sinister fact, which never fails to make its appearance whenever the platitudes of kindly sentiment begin to give place to some congruous public action. The Bishop's zeal for unity could not carry him to a formal recognition of a Church which was not episcopally governed. The consequence of this hurtful fiasco has been to throw back, and not to advance, the cause of Christian reunion in Scotland. I take this list of good and pious men who have subscribed the appeal for unity to which I am endeavouring to respond to-day. Surely it is not too much to ask of the advocates of reunion that they should themselves be on terms of mutual recognition, that they should be ready to acknowledge fraternity by a common reception of the Holy Sacrament. Until they have settled that point with their consciences, I respectfully submit that they are not qualified for the task to which they have put their hands. I am only saying what is notorious when I point out, that this condition is fulfilled in all of them save only in the Anglican representatives. The representative of the Roman Church stood a little more remote still; he could not even sign in common with the rest,

but limited his action to a separate letter of vague sympathy. The words of Christ in the text come to our minds with singular and searching relevance, when we reflect on the combination of Anglican exhortations to reunion and Anglican exclusiveness—

"*Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*"

It will be said that the exclusive Divine Right of the Episcopal ministry is matter of *conviction*, and that it could only be abandoned at the cost of infidelity to conscience. I can but answer that there is a true sense in which we are responsible for our convictions, and that we have no right to plead the authority of conscience for any course of action until we have honestly tried to enlighten our consciences. The signatories say most justly that "*we all need open and candid minds to receive light and yet more light*"; my complaint against the advocates of Divine Rights is not that they believe in them, but that they so believe in them as not to examine with "open and candid minds" the evidences of their belief. As long as they do believe in the exclusive validity of an Episcopalian ministry they will perforce traverse the futile and familiar cycle which begins with sentiment and ends with disappointment. Nearly twenty years have passed since the

Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops sterilized in advance their efforts for reunion by placing in the foreground of all negotiation the exclusive claim of the "historic episcopate," actually raising the form of Church organization to an equality with the acceptance of the Scriptures and the sacraments. It is worse than useless to invite men to a discussion, when you have postulated your own conclusions in advance. The parade of elaborate inquiry is hypocritical if you first place the very subject of inquiry on the level of unalterable truth. Chillingworth's complaint of the Roman Catholic controversialists of his day holds good of all who carry into inquiries and discussions minds that are already made up.

> "As for your pretence that to find the meaning of those places (sc. the Proof Texts) you compare divers texts, you consult originals, you examine translations, and use all the means by Protestants appointed, I have told you before, that all this is vain and hypocritical, if (as your manner and your doctrine is) you give not yourselves liberty of judgment in the use of those means; if you make not yourselves judges of, but only advocates for, the doctrine of your Church, refusing to see what these means shew you, if in any way it make against the doctrine of your Church, though it be as clear as the light at

> noon. Remove prejudice, even the balance, and hold it even, make it indifferent to you which way you go to heaven so you go the true, which religion be true so you be of it, then use the means, and pray for God's assistance, and as sure as God is true, you shall be led into all necessary truth." [1]

Until we are prepared to accept teaching on this matter of validity of the ecclesiastical claims we advance, I am constrained to think that our prayers and preachings on the subject of reunion, so far from leading to any good result, are likely to strengthen us in our own prejudices, and render the breach between us and our separated brethren even wider. If we begin by making an affair of the conscience of the very dogma which is in dispute between us and them, I do not see how there can be any sincerity in discussion, or any advantage in conference. If, on the other hand, we are genuinely anxious to take into our reckoning the new facts, which scholarship and experience have accumulated since the severance first took place; if we really want to revise our theories of ecclesiastical authority in order to make them harmonize with the actual circumstances of Christendom; if we are honestly prepared to surrender views, however strongly entrenched in sentiment and tradition, which cannot sustain themselves at the bar of history, or abide the scrutiny of impartial

[1] Page 185.

reason, then I conceive that nothing can be more full of happy promise than that we should inaugurate inquiry, and consecrate conference, by solemn acts of penitence and prayer.

It is solely with our duty as English Churchmen that I concern myself. Be the faults of the non-Episcopalian Churches what they may, they have at least this argument against us, that the barrier to co-operation and fellowship is erected and maintained by us. Moreover, they can argue with irresistible truth that this barrier is of comparatively recent construction, and that its maintenance has only recently been so firmly insisted upon. It is superfluous to recapitulate the proofs of the statement, that the necessity of the Episcopal government was an open question in the English Church during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Reformation-settlement was effected. Little interest was taken in the question during the eighteenth century, and when in the nineteenth the Tractarians asserted the exclusive Divine Right of the Episcopal ministry, their doctrine seemed to be both novel and unpleasing. The last half-century has witnessed the triumph of Tractarian opinions in the Anglican hierarchy, and now it is more nearly true than it has ever been in the Reformed Church before, to say that the Divine Right of bishops is an Anglican doctrine. It certainly cannot be denied that this return of the English clergy to medieval

notions of the ministry has coincided with a revolution in historical judgments, which has swept away the old foundations of the theory of apostolical succession. Just when it might have been supposed that historical science was removing the most obvious and the most obstinate of all the barriers to Christian fellowship, that barrier has been re-erected by the English clergy. It is a singular and profoundly depressing spectacle. An accomplished Oxford professor has just published a volume of essays in which he exalts the tolerant latitude of the Anglican Church. Puritans and Romans, he says, were alike in seeking to "bind an uncertain opinion on the consciences of all men," but the English Church resolutely pursued a middle course.

> "What the Church of England has done—its great service to catholicity—is to insist upon the certain, and to leave the uncertain to the judgment of the individual."[1]

If indeed that were the case—not only with the English Church in the theory of its Reformation, but also of the English Church as a practical system—then we should not find the way to reunion invariably closed by this fatal theory of exclusive Divine Right vested in popes or bishops. We should not deem it an extravagant proposition that Christian men of various

[1] Vide *Wayside Sketches*, p. 211.

denominational descriptions should unite in receiving the sacrament of the Holy Communion, nor would it seem chimerical to hope that they could agree to teach the simple elements of their common religion to children, without bringing into the class-room the unseemly and irrelevant wranglings of denominational conflict.

> "May we not think," asks Dr. Bigg, "that the direst offence a man can commit against the unity of the Church is to define what God has not defined, and to restrict Christian liberty by adding to the conditions of salvation?"[1]

That question ought to weigh heavily on the Anglican conscience this Whitsuntide. Are we, in our controversy with the Nonconformists of this country, guilty of making unwarrantable claims, and thus "adding to the conditions of salvation?" In so far as we insist upon the dogma of apostolical succession, and on that basis insist on judging the validity of Christian ministries and the very being of Christian Churches, I am very clear that we must plead guilty to the indictment. The pathetic thing is that there is nothing in the constitution or history of the Reformed Church of England which compels us to adopt this arrogant and (as I cannot doubt) indefensible position. Until we cleanse our own case of fault we are in no

[1] Vide *Wayside Sketches*, p. 178.

position to play the *rôle* of peacemaker in Christendom. Our insistence on the blessedness of unity and the evils of division rather exposes us to the censure of Christ's condemnation of those who, while carrying in themselves the greater fault, yet denounced the fault of others. "*Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*"

There are two conceptions of unity which in the review of Christian history stand out in startling contrast. The one has dominated Christian thought from Cyprian's time till the present age. It postulates the existence of a divinely-constituted hierarchy, apart from which the Church cannot exist. It has received its completest expression in the Roman Papacy, and its course from the first has been marked by secular ambition, and all the train of vices which belong thereto. To it belongs the dark scandal of persecution. It is what men have in mind when they speak of sacerdotalism. In its Roman form it has not many friends in England now, but it passes without the censures it merits in other forms less logical but in essence not less profoundly false. The other conception is that which finds frequent expression in the New Testament, which has never been wholly forgotten by Christians, and which came into triumphant recognition at the

Reformation. It fastens attention primarily on the Person of Christ, and perpetuates the notion of Christianity as fundamentally a discipleship. It finds the cementing principle of the Christian society in a common allegiance to the One Lord. The preaching of the Gospel and the ministry of the sacraments are the unfailing marks of the Church, and where these exist and are accompanied by due moral effects, the complete demonstration of ecclesiastical character is provided. Organization sinks inevitably into a secondary place; the Christian society finds appropriate institutions as it traverses time, and these are at once authenticated to Christian recognition by their spiritual competence, and restrained from excessive developments by their subordination to the society, from which they draw their title and frame. The tendency of the one conception of Christianity is towards an ecclesiastical despotism; that of the other towards a spiritual commonwealth or federation. The one conception is distinctively mundane; the other is distinctively Christian. This fact may be obscured, often has been obscured, by the admirable character of the individuals who at any given time represent the false view, and by the unworthiness of those who represent the true; but, though the virtues or the vices of individuals may confuse the issues for a time, they cannot long obscure the facts. In the

long run the effect of the fundamental principles makes itself apparent.

It will be sufficiently plain that the future of Christian unity really depends on the triumph of the evangelical conception of Christianity. The true gravity of this embittered opposition to the notion of combined Christian effort in religious education arises from the evidence it provides as to the conception of Christianity, which is commending itself to the acceptance of English Churchmen. If it be really the case that the general body of English Churchmen do regard association with the members of non-Episcopalian Churches on equal terms as religiously inadmissible, then it is clear that there is no possibility of attaining reunion along the lines of conference and negotiation. All that is meant in that case by an English Churchman, when he pleads for the restoration of visible fellowship, is the natural desire of the natural man that his side in a hotly-contested conflict should win. He stands with respect to his non-Episcopalian neighbour precisely where the Roman Catholic stands with respect to himself. It argues little charity and no sacrifice to work for reunion on those lines. Activity so conditioned will inevitably take the aspect of proselytizing, at least in the view of one of the parties concerned. With the record of nineteen centuries behind us, it seems to be little consistent with that humble and teachable spirit,

which we are bidden to pray for to-day, that we should continue to insist on that universal recognition of one type of ecclesiastical government which has been the most fruitful parent of strife and bitterness throughout Christian history.

I have limited myself this morning to one only, though the most widely operative of the causes of Christian disunion, but I am loath to bring my sermon to a close without reminding you that there are other causes which perhaps are more within the control and responsibility of individual Christians. While the mischiefs of a false theory cannot be removed by the personal excellence of those who maintain it, they can be mitigated; and, conversely, the good effects of a true theory can be neutralized, if not wholly destroyed, by personal ill conduct. It is very little use holding as a matter of belief that all Christians are truly your brethren, if that belief has no expression in your conduct. You must practise tolerance, as well as preach it. Pride is a grievous obstacle to fellowship—class pride, professional pride, purse pride. We must try to understand other points of view than our own, make large allowances for prejudices which, however violent and embarrassing, are yet natural and even excusable, seek to discover the best and not the worst meaning in all Christian action. It is the mutual suspiciousness of Christian men which sterilizes

their efforts at mutual understanding. Risk something in the cause of fraternity; meet more than half-way the approaches of Christians. All the difficult practical questions, which emerge when the attempt is made to bring about an effective co-operation of Churches, will lose half their difficulty in an atmosphere of good-will.

> "The real unity of Christendom," wrote Phillips Brooks just twenty years ago, "is not to be found at last in identity of organization, nor in identity of dogma. Both of these have been dreamed of and have failed. But in the unity of spiritual consecration to a common Lord . . . all souls shall be one with each other in virtue of that simple fact, in virtue of that common reaching after Christ, that common earnestness of loyalty to what they know of Him. There is the only unity that is thoroughly worthy either of God or man.
>
> "This seems to many, I know, to be dim and vague. It is a terrible and sad sign of how far our Christianity is from its perfection that now, after these centuries of its sway, the central key and secret of its power should seem dim and vague to men." [1]

It was thus at the first that the Lord Himself declared the truth, "*One is your teacher, and*

[1] Vide *Life*, ii. 501.

all ye are brethren." The common allegiance draws in its train the fraternal relationship. "*They shall become one flock, one shepherd*"—that is His promise; the unity of the Christian society shall arise from, and vest in, the oneness of obedience. "*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness,*" writes the great apostle who entered so deeply into the *mind of Christ.* Let us pray, then, for the unity of Christendom, with no narrower fellowship in our minds. Let us pray the Holy Spirit of God to pour His bright beams into our darkened understandings, and to kindle within our cold hearts the pure fires of Christian charity. Let us go forth from this solemn worship as men called and commissioned to seek peace and ensue it, and let the following days reveal the sincerity and ardour of the aspirations we have here confessed.

IV

CHRIST AND THE NATIONAL LIFE

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."—Judges v. 23.

1. THESE words of the patriotic prophetess reveal a mental attitude which is extremely interesting in itself, and very well worth considering. Evidently Deborah identifies the cause of Israel with the cause of Israel's God. To be disloyal to the nation implied, to her thinking, religious treason. This identification of patriotism and religion belongs to an early phase of religious development, and is unquestionably associated with the crudest notions of the Deity, and of His relation to His worshippers. In discarding the primitive notions, however, mankind has not parted with the old habit which they created. Even among the civilized Christian communities of the modern world the tendency to identify the

apparent interests of the nation and the cause of God prevails. In time of deep patriotic emotion this would seem to be inevitable. For the religious instincts are then alert and active; men have been lifted above themselves; they are deliberately facing extraordinary demands on their self-control and power of self-sacrifice. Religion gathers into itself, unifies, exalts, and hallows all these highest sentiments of human nature. Patriotism, just in proportion to its sincerity and its strength, merges into religion. The words of Deborah are found to utter the very thoughts of Christian men, as they gird themselves for a desperate effort, and see their fellows flinch from the task. It is said that the famous Presbyterian divine, Stephen Marshall—who, you will remember, was appointed one of the morning lecturers in St. Margaret's in 1642—preached no less than sixty times from the text. It is a curious evidence of the temper of men's minds at that period, when the great civil war was on the verge of breaking out. In the course of the lamentable conflict which has been waged in the far East, between the two nations which might fairly be styled respectively the least and the most ardent representatives of that Western civilization which, be it always remembered, is historically the offspring of ideas drawn from Christ's religion, this disposition to identify the national cause with the cause of God has been

powerful and manifest. The language of Deborah has been echoed in numerous declarations issued by the ecclesiastical authorities of Russia. We should lie open to a charge of insincerity if we did not acknowledge that much was said and written by religious persons in England, during the South African War, which was more agreeable in tone and in tendency with the patriotic exaltation of the Hebrew prophetess than with the moral teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. It will not be denied that we do still readily identify the political interests of the nation, as they appear to ourselves, with the cause of God. We are all naturally disposed to elevate our personal judgment in practical affairs into a standard of essential right, like George III, who confessed that "since he had no wish but the prosperity of his own dominions, he must look upon all who would not heartily assist him as bad men, as well as bad subjects." I need not point out that this attitude of mind is quite inconsistent with genuine tolerance: indeed, the reason why intolerance has been so frequently associated with religion is simply the fact that the identification of personal perceptions of truth and right with the cause of God is, within the religious sphere, eminently natural and, therefore, extremely frequent. "*Curse ye Meroz*" is a formula which is at home on the lips of enthusiastic believers, and it never fails to awaken

those passions which are least akin to justice and to charity. There have been occasions, indeed, when the cause of God was espoused by fanatics, but I think there never has been any occasion when the union of fanaticism and the cause of God has not brought weakness and discredit on the latter. This morning, however, it is not of religious fanaticism in the ordinary sense of the term that I desire to speak, but rather of the influence which religion ought to exercise upon our notions of patriotic duty. In what degree, if in any, can the fierce words of Deborah be made the vehicle of a Christian sentiment, and used in the service of Christian practice? "*Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they come not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*"

2. In the first place, surely we must maintain that these fierce words do enshrine a conception of human affairs which is profoundly true and apparently Christian. That human affairs are the scene of a true conflict between the will of God and oppugnant forces, that every individual must have his place therein, for or against the will of God, that no individual is so without illumination on the supreme issue as not to be able, if he will, to ally himself with the divine cause—these are the very assumptions of morality, and they are taken for granted in the

Gospel. We may not at every crisis of politics, when men must come to decisions and take some practical course, say of any, however profoundly we may dissent from their views, that they are against the Lord. "*Curse ye Meroz*" is always out of place on the lips of fallible men; only supernatural direction could justify in point of reason what, perhaps, nothing could justify in point of charity—an anathema on opponents. When St. Paul, starting his missionary journeys, inaugurated, with whatever justification, the melancholy record of religious coercion by solemnly cursing his most conspicuous opponent, we are specially told that he was supernaturally directed, "*filled with the Holy Ghost.*" Such supernatural direction alone, indeed, could redeem the apostle's action from injustice and unreason—injustice because he could not read his opponent's heart, or know his motives; unreason for he could not easily reconcile such violence with "*the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*" It is certain, however, that we have no apparently supernatural direction in the affairs of life. None of us enjoys immunity from error, or monopoly of wisdom. Even if we can concede to an inspired apostle the terrible privilege of anathema, we cannot decently claim it for ourselves. But though "*Curse ye Meroz*" may never be applied by us to our fellows, we ought ever to be in some sense in fear of it as applicable to ourselves. The

parasite of tolerance—we must ever remember—is apathy, and, like all parasites, it ends by destroying what it fastens on. Apathy does, in the long run, kill tolerance, for it becomes a lethargic selfishness which is the very negation of that generous justice which is the core of tolerance. Hence that familiar but dismaying portent—the sceptical persecutor. There was no fanaticism in the famous counsel of Caiaphas, or in the enigmatic question of Pilate. Expediency was the keynote of the one, and scepticism the confession of the other. The libertines of the Restoration, who passed the Test and Conventicle Acts, were no fanatical believers in any version of truth. When religious conviction deserts the soul it does not depart alone. With it go the restraints as well as the excesses of faith. History records amazing paradoxes, which find here their explanation. Take a single and notorious instance. The Schism Act was passed at the end of Queen Anne's reign by the most sceptical of English politicians—Bolingbroke. "*Curse ye Meroz*" is an oddly suggestive formula on the lips of the sensualist and the unbeliever, yet it has been on their lips not rarely in the past. We must always remember that apathy, or indifference to truth, though it readily passes for tolerance, is properly opposed to it, and has often rivalled fanaticism itself in oppression.

The true security against intolerance lies in

a worthy conception of truth, not in a contempt of all conviction; when we have grasped the fact of moral responsibility as it bears upon our own action, we shall be little disposed to interfere with the incommunicable obligation of others. If we hear "*Curse ye Meroz*" as a legend of heavenly warning whispered in our own ear at the cross-roads of life, where we choose our path, in the babel of the world, where we take our side, we shall never hurl it at others in the reckless ignorance of bigotry, or in the dangerous ardour of partisanship.

3. In the next place, assuming this conception of human affairs as the scene of a true conflict between the will of God and oppugnant forces, how ought our conduct as patriotic citizens to be affected? Can we, as presumably in that primitive age Deborah and her contemporaries could do, simply accept the national interest, in the conventional and obvious sense of the phrase, as competent to interpret for us our religious duty? Is it enough to be consistently and enthusiastically an advocate for our own country at every point and on every occasion? Has religion fulfilled its function when it stimulates and exalts patriotism? We shall all agree that Christianity cannot be satisfied by these suggestions. The religion of Christ is not, in the old sense of the phrase, a national religion. Christ has commissioned no nation and no race to be, in any exceptional

or exclusive sense, the historic guardian of His truth. "*We must obey God rather than men*" is a formula of essential Christianity: and God still speaks to us, as in the old prophetic age, most authoritatively and intelligibly from within ourselves. "*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*" This interior guidance, as it is ministered in the solitude of the individual spirit, so it is incompetent for the purposes of general direction. We are rightly suspicious of appeals to conscience in the region of public policy, on this very account. Whatever may be the value of intuitions to those who receive them, they are clearly of no more value to others than their own judgment allows. Political wisdom is not learned in the sanctuary or in the assemblies of the saints, but in the patient study of the past and in the school of actual experience. Hardly any lesson is more consistently taught by the chequered and various history of mankind than this: that high character is no security against political folly, and noble intentions no effectual barrier against unworthy methods. We are not, therefore, to suppose that, as Christians, we possess some distinctive insight into public affairs which others do not possess, that we can take a short cut to our political decisions, and that those decisions are morally binding on the

acceptance of others. To think in that way is to think fanatically, and thinking fanatically is the condition of intemperate speech and, when opportunity comes, of intolerant action. Christianity no more commits us to a specific political doctrine, or party, or programme, than to a specific nationality or government. What, then, we ask again, ought to be the effect on our political conduct of our accepting this prophetic notion of human affairs as the arena of a conflict between the will of God and the oppugnant forces of evil, a conflict in which we ourselves of necessity take part, and in which we are competent to choose the part we take?

4. At least three consequences seem to follow directly from such a doctrine. We shall inevitably take a large view of public duty. Is it excessive, when we reflect on the facts as seen from the standpoint of religion, to apply to politics the words of St. Paul—"*the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*"? We cannot limit our view to the immediate issues; we cannot look only on our own things: we must lift our eyes, and let them sweep more distant horizons. No affairs of men can be wholly alien from our concern; we cannot accept the pseudo-patriotism, which is entrenched in popular ignorance, and jealousy of other nations. Our patriotism has a positive character: we would serve the all-embracing purpose

of the Creator with the powers we have, and by the opportunities which come to us. It is as Englishmen we must play our part, not as Frenchmen, or Russians; but then the part we play is truly related to their parts in a necessary and harmonious co-action. Our patriotism must interpret to us theirs, and the distinctiveness of our service find its justification in the distinctiveness of theirs. This higher patriotism, with its larger, more generous outlook on the world, is a principle in human affairs not of strife, but of harmony. Inspired by this just and reasonable spirit, the diplomatic intercourse of nations becomes no more, what it has so often been, a school of arts and crafts, but a powerful instrument of enlightenment and peace. And then, together with this large view of public duty, will go a high estimate of personal responsibility. Let us grant, if you will, that our history, and perhaps our circumstances, impose on us what is called the system of party-government, that fact cannot possibly excuse to a religious man the unworthy complaisance which party-spirit too commonly exacts.

There is a famous passage in one of Edmund Burke's speeches, which are the classics of English political literature, which describes what in those days of corruption was a familiar phenomenon of public life, the decline of virtue in a politician. In a more general sense, I may borrow his words as true not of politicians

only, but of us all, as we in turn pass into public life in one or other description of social activity :—

> "I believe," he said, "the instances are exceedingly rare of men immediately passing over a clear, marked line of virtue into declared vice and corruption. There are a sort of middle tints and shades between the two extremes; there is something uncertain on the confines of the two empires which they first pass through, and which renders the change easy and imperceptible. There are even a sort of splendid impositions so well contrived that, at the very time the path of rectitude is quitted for ever, men seem to be advancing into some higher and nobler road of public conduct." [1]

What, then, shall save us from this subtle disease of partisanship, which dulls within us the sense of justice and silently disallows the claim of truth? Is it not the conviction that in all we are saying and doing in the vexed scenes of public life, we are for ever serving or repudiating the purpose of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being? Is it not the voice of warning in our ears, as it were a far-off echo from a Judgment Day, where men's lives stand out in the naked severity of actual fact, unconfused by passion, unexcused by

[1] Vide *Works*, i. 421.

custom? "*Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*"

Finally, is it not inevitable that wherever this prophetic conception of human affairs is accepted, and made the basis of action, there will be an intimate relation maintained between politics and religion? The private habit of the man will certainly affect the public course of the politician, not by dictating particular policies, but by providing a standpoint from which all policies will be considered and decided upon. To believe with all our hearts in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to believe that we ourselves have been commissioned to do His work in the world: we are surely called so to act in our several stations that they become serviceable in this interest of the world's redemption. We are to know, to understand, even to possess "*the Mind of Christ*"; and then express that mind in the activities and relationships of life. In the language of Deborah, we are summoned "*to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*" Give me leave to remind you that it is the principal object of our religious observances to sustain this aspect of life in our minds. Surely, when we recall the influences which are always tending to drive it out, and replace it by lower aspects, we cannot doubt that we wrong our own souls if we

neglect these moving and salutary rites. There is moral strength in devotional habit: the deliberate utterance of conviction strengthens it: a man is the better able to fight the good fight by solemnly renewing his allegiance to the Master whom he follows. St. Peter, in his ecstasy on the mountain of transfiguration, spoke the truth. It is good for us to be here: good to lift up our hearts from earth to heaven, good to rise on the mounting wings of devout enthusiasm beyond the pinched frontiers of time to those everlasting hills where our eyes may "*see the King in His beauty*" and behold a "*far-stretching land.*"

V

THE CLAIMS OF CÆSAR AND OF GOD

(PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY)

"Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare Him in His talk. And they send to Him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left Him, and went their way."—St. Matthew xxii. 15–22.

An extraordinary interest attaches to the record of those occasions in the life of Christ when He was directly challenged on some difficult question of practice. Very often we are tempted to regret that the circumstances under which the Master lived and taught were

so unlike those with which we must reckon, and we turn from the pages of the Gospel with a certain impatience when we are perplexed by the characteristic problems of our time, because, indeed, those ever-sacred pages carry no directly relevant message, and seem almost to mock us by their simplicity and remoteness. We are tempted to wish that the life of Christ had been lived in one of the great pagan cities of antiquity, where economic and moral questions were in sharp debate, and men were wearied and puzzled by conflicting claims of duty. It needs, however, but a little reflection in order that such temptation should be successfully resisted, and we should conform our minds to a more reverent and becoming temper. For we can see that the perpetual relevance of the Gospel to the needs of men is strictly conditioned by its abstinence from adjudication on the problems of one age. This general abstinence, moreover, adds greatly to the importance of such exceptions as the Gospel contains, for it suggests that our Master only departed from His accustomed reticence in such cases as were neither local merely, nor secular merely, but recurrent and normal. He legislated only for the perpetual needs of men, not for their transitory perplexities. This suggestion is sustained by the sacred record. An examination of the very few examples of direct adjudication on cases of conscience which the Gospel contains will make

it evident that Christ selected always questions of perpetual and universal concern, and gave such answers as were suitable to all men at all times and under all circumstances. Unless my reckoning be at fault, there are no more than five such answers on record—answers, I mean, to specific cases of conscience proposed to our Lord by His contemporaries. It will be worth our while to enumerate these. The extent of the obligation of Sabbath observance and its character, the relative importance of ecclesiastical and moral laws, the toleration of ecclesiastical irregularity in the interest of spiritual loyalty, the validity and duration of the marriage tie, the duty and limitation of citizenship—all these questions were directly brought under our Saviour's consideration, and were made by Him the subjects of illuminating decisions. All these questions, moreover, are for Christian men of universal and continual importance. The sentences in which Christ gave His judgment remain for all time the final words on the issues concerned. Let me rehearse them, and you will see what I mean. "*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: so that the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath*"—there is laid once for all the foundation for a sound treatment of the practical problems of Sabbath observance. Nothing arbitrary, or rigid, or non-natural, or merely external is allowed. The whole subject

is carried on to the plane of the higher expediency, and placed in relation to the standing necessities of human well-being. Take His answer with respect to the traditional rules as to ceremonial and purifications and fastings: "*There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man.*" Here for all time He establishes the true order of importance, first the moral, then the ceremonial. Consider, again, what perpetual relevance attaches to His answer to the apostle who seemed to claim credit for his intolerance towards a Christian worker, who did not form one of the apostolic company: "*Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able quickly to speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is for us.*" In a single sentence see how the Divine Head of the Church disallows and discredits all merely conventional tests of religious sincerity, and all merely ecclesiastical certificates of Christian discipleship. Once more, take His sublime summary of all that is truly implicit in marriage, and think out for yourself its profound and perpetual wisdom: "*What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*" Finally, there is the instance recorded in our text. The validity and the nature of the claim, which the State makes upon the obedience of the

individual, are summarized in one illuminating sentence: "*Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*" The consideration of these remarkable words must engage our careful consideration in this sermon.

The question which the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians propounded was one which deeply exercised the minds of our Lord's contemporaries, and though the motive of their questioning was malicious, yet the difficulty they raised was none the less serious. It was, moreover, a difficulty which would be intensified and widely extended by Christianity. The pagan world could not appreciate the problems of the individual conscience, for the pagan State was unquestionably supreme in every sphere of human life. The familiar formula, "Church and State," was properly unmeaning to the members of a society which frankly made the Church a subordinate part of the State, and was accustomed to deify the reigning emperor as the embodiment of the State. The Jews only realized the problems of the conscience in politics when they became a subject people, for their religion implied a theocracy, and in a theocracy there could be no conflict between the claims of religion and the claims of the State, since the State itself was also a Church, and there were no claims advanced by the State which were not also

professedly and by universal admission religious. At the time of Christ's advent the Jews were a subject nation, and accordingly the central issue of Jewish politics was implicit in the question raised by Christ's visitors: "*Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?*"

The contemporaries of Christ gave different answers to that question. There may be distinguished three parties among them. Some, perhaps the most genuinely religious, acquiesced in the Roman Government, and retired altogether from active politics. Regarding Israel as deeply guilty of religious unfaithfulness, they interpreted the national misfortunes as divine punishments, and conceived themselves bound in conscience to endure them unmurmuringly. They sustained their faith with the conviction that the providence of God ordained for a purified and regenerated nation spiritual destinies of the sublimest character, and they "*waited the Lord's leisure*" in devout resignation to His will. St. Luke's description of the aged Simeon, who blessed the infant Saviour, may be applied to these Jewish believers: "*This man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel.*" We may suppose that the majority of the first Christian converts was drawn from this section of the Jews. Next to these we may place that large class of religious Jews who were Pharisees in creed and Nationalists in politics. These

included many sincerely devout persons, of whom the apostle Paul before his conversion is a notable instance. Their zeal was genuine and fierce, but it was not according to knowledge. Among them, however, were too many whose political ardour was out of all proportion to their religious belief, who carried from their religion into their politics nothing but the fanatical and uncompromising disposition which marks ecclesiastical controversy, who were politically zealots and religiously hypocrites. They dwelt much on Israel's election, and little on Israel's transgression. Filling their minds with the assurance of national supremacy by divine decree, they resented as an intolerable degradation that submission to the power of the Roman Empire which had become politically inevitable. "The rule of the heathen over the people of God seemed in their eyes an enormity whose abolition was by all means to be striven for. Israel must acknowledge no other king than God alone, and the ruler of the house of David, whom He anointed. The supremacy of the heathen was illegal and presumptuous. From this standpoint it was questionable, not merely whether obedience and payment of tribute to a heathen power was a duty, but whether it was lawful."[1] From the ranks of these fanatical Nationalists had been drawn the following of that "Judas of

[1] *Vide* Schürer, ii. 2, 18.

Galilee" referred to by Gamaliel in his speech to the Sanhedrin, who "*rose up in the days of the enrolment, and drew away some of the people after him,*" and finally "*perished*" with his deluded victims. "*Zealots*" and "*Assassins*" were but the extreme sections of this powerful faction. Finally, there was a third party, consisting mostly of the wealthy and educated classes, who were supporters of the dynasty of Herod, accepting the subject princedom as a sufficient realization of the national hopes, and enjoying the privileges of power. "They were," we are told, "neither the adherents in particular of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, nor exactly the friends of Rome; but those among the Jews who, in more or less veiled opposition to the Roman procuratorship, as well as to the idea of a pure theocracy, desired the restoration of the national kingdom under one or other of the sons of Herod. Their alliance with the Pharisees in opposition to our Lord was not due to religious or political sympathy, but to the recognition by both parties that Jesus was their greatest common foe." [1]

Quakers, Ultramontanes, Erastians—Low Churchmen, High Churchmen, Broad Churchmen—Evangelicals, Sacerdotalists, Latitudinarians—by such modern equivalents we may picture to ourselves the diverse streams of opinion which found expression in the parties

[1] Vide *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Hastings, ii. 362.

of the Jews in the time of Christ. The question of paying tribute to Cæsar would bring into view the grand dividing issue of the age. The modern equivalents which I have suggested will suffice to indicate that the issue which divided the Jews of the first century divides men still. Perhaps it would be no extravagant supposition to regard this question of the Lord's enemies as uttering the most pressing anxieties at this time of the Lord's followers: "*Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?*" In every Christian country the ancient controversy as to the relation of the civil to the ecclesiastical power has again become acute, and in our own land it is being combined with the distinct but allied questions raised by the attempt to establish a system of State schools, which shall be broadly Christian and yet inflict no hardship on individuals and coteries. I have no concern here with the partisan aspects of these questions, but it would be impossible and even absurd for me to discuss the episode recorded in the text without keeping steadily in view its relevance to the actual problems of our time, and trying to indicate the nature of the guidance which it is competent to give us with respect to them. What, then, does Christ reply to His questioners, whose hypocritical malice He exposes, even while He allows the gravity of the issue they raise?

He begins by bringing them sharply back to the facts of the case. He will not permit the question to be treated apart from the actual conditions, as if it were a purely abstract or academical discussion to which they were inviting Him. "*Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's.*" The suggestion was obvious. It could not be rightly permissible to discuss Cæsar's right to tribute, when the protection of Cæsar's law was accepted and Cæsar's coin was current in the land. It was a principle of the later rabbis that the right of coinage implied the authority of levying taxes, and indeed constituted such evidence of *de facto* government as to make it a duty absolutely to submit to it. "So much was this felt, that the Maccabees, and in the last Jewish war, Bar Kokhabh, the false Messiah, issued a coinage dating from the liberation of Jerusalem. We cannot therefore doubt that this principle about coinage, taxation, and government was generally accepted in Judæa."[1] Christ indicates clearly that there is no fundamental question of morality at stake in the recognition of the claims of the State within that sphere in which men perforce recognize the power and accept the services of

[1] *Vide* Edersheim, ii. 385.

the State. The answer to their conscientious scruples lies ready to hand in the evident facts of practice. It is the conclusion of plain reason, as well as the commandment of the Lord, that we should "*render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.*" The question of the Pharisees and Herodians has been answered, and on the whole answered according to the Herodian view. But Christ is not content to leave the matter there; for to do so would convey the impression that He sanctioned the cynical opportunism of the Herodians, and would have left untouched the really serious difficulty implicit in the question itself. Accordingly He adds a clause to His reply which has the effect of establishing a distinction, which the Herodians were wont to ignore, and of pointing a moral, which the Pharisees were not willing to receive. "*Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's.*" There are claims, then, other than those of Cæsar, the recognition of which implies no wronging of Cæsar, the refusal to recognize which involves rebellion against the Divine Author of all Cæsar's legitimate authority. The effect of Christ's answer was to convict both parties of unreality, to awaken every sincere element in the hearts of both, to place the issue at stake on a higher plane, to disallow as irrelevant most of the pleas and counter-pleas of the long controversy between them. "*And when they*

heard it, they marvelled, and left Him, and went their way."

If it be asked, as indeed it cannot but be asked, by what tokens the authentic claims of God shall be known, is there any doubt that our Divine Master would have endorsed the sublime answer of the prophet who, centuries before, had been challenged on that very point? You will recall the setting of Micah's great oracle. The prophet is represented in colloquy with a heathen inquirer, who proposes the question on which the whole character of religion turns: "*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?*" The prophet's answer is an emphatic assertion of the divine authority and teaching office of the conscience: "*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good! and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*" This doctrine of the conscience is well expanded by Bishop Butler—

> "There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust; which, without being

> consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly; and which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own."[1]

Christ stands with the prophets in referring the supreme question to the individual conscience, illuminated by His words, cleansed and quickened by His Spirit, taught by His example, but, with all these divine assistances, required in the last resort to answer for every man with plenary right. He encourages no man to depend on any external guidance which can lift the burden of responsibility from his shoulders and make plain before his face the path of his duty. The only "*spiritual*" authority which He sanctions is that which speaks within the man himself. "*The kingdom of God is within you.*" As with the individual believer, so with the society of believers. I cannot find that He authorized one generation to take over the responsibilities of its successors, but that He assured His followers of an ever-present inspiration which would suffice for their needs in all circumstances. It is mockery to talk grandly of the "living Church" as the authority to which you mean to submit all

[1] Vide *Sermons*, p. 45, ed. Bernard.

practical questions for answer, if all you really design is a reference back to some past phase of ecclesiastical development, and a determination to re-establish some long-abrogated discipline. We cannot too often and too strongly emphasize the fallacy which underlies the insistence on past decisions, doctrinal and disciplinary, of the Christian Church, as if they possessed some other authority than that which their own value as true and expedient decisions can confer upon them. It has justly been regarded as a providential circumstance that the apostles lived and died under the mistaken belief that the second coming of Christ was near at hand. They did not think that they "were building up a Church which was to last through the ages," and were thus preserved from well-intentioned but futile efforts to anticipate the needs of futurity.

> "It became the fashion of a later age to ascribe to the apostles a series of ordinances and constitutions. Any such theory is quite inconsistent with the spirit of their time. They never wrote or legislated except so far as existing needs demanded. They founded such institutions as were clearly required by some immediate want, or were part of our Lord's teaching. But they never administered or planned with a view to the remote future. Their writings were occasional, suggested by some

> pressing difficulty; but they thus incidentally laid down great broad principles which became the guiding principles of the Church. The Church, therefore, is governed by case law, not by code law: by broad principles, not by minute regulations. It may seem a paradox, but yet it is profoundly true, that the Church is adapted to the needs of every age, just because the original preachers of Christianity never attempted to adapt it to the needs of any period but their own." [1]

The claims of Cæsar, then, are not determined by some fantastic political theory, whether of dynastic divine right, or of democracy, or of any other form of social order, but always and everywhere by considerations of expediency and good sense; the claims of God are not determined by the encyclicals of pontiffs, or the canons of councils self-styled œcumenical, or of convocations and such-like assemblies, or of any external authority, but always and everywhere separately for every man by his own conscience. Other authorities depend on the approval of the conscience for whatsoever title to acceptance they can advance; apart from that approval they can carry no assurance of the divine will. And when thus we throw on the individual conscience this supreme responsibility, we have manifestly

[1] *Vide* Sanday and Headlam's *Romans*, p. 380.

identified the "spiritual" with the "moral," and have refused to imagine any difference between the claim of God upon us in the commerce of social life and the claim of right. "*The kingdom of God*," says the apostle, "*is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.*" And so the answer of the Lord is relevant and satisfying still, after the lapse of two millenniums: "*Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*"

VI

THE CHRISTIAN IN PUBLIC LIFE

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."—1 Thessalonians v. 19–22.

In the Book of the Acts we learn that St. Paul had suffered much from the fanaticism of the Thessalonian mob. Elsewhere the opposition of the authorities had been the principal obstacle to his progress; in Thessalonica the authorities and the educated classes appear to have been well impressed by his preaching, but the pagan multitude broke out into dangerous rioting. "The lower classes, the least educated, and the most enslaved to paganism on its vulgarest and most superstitious side, were the most fanatical opponents of the new teaching; while the politarchs were by no means inclined to take active measures against it, and the better educated people seem to have supplied most of the converts. Men of all classes were impressed by the preaching of

Paul, but only women of the leading families: and the difference is obviously due to the fact that the poorer women were most likely to be under the sway of superstition."[1] The Church, which was gathered out of this fanatical population, would certainly not have altered its temperament, and for that reason would have been specially inclined to abuse the new liberty in Christ which the apostle preached. Religious movements are ever marked by great enthusiasm and many strange exhibitions of spiritual fervour. Even now, in a country which has been nominally Christian for more than 1,300 years, and among people who may be fairly described as hereditary Christians, we have witnessed in religious revivals phenomena which suggest the frenzies of paganism rather than the Gospel of Christ. In the first days of the Church, when men and women trained in the licentious traditions of paganism came under the influence of the mightiest spiritual movement of history, we cannot doubt that scenes of strange disorder and repulsive violence were often witnessed. Indeed, the student of St. Paul's epistles will be at no loss for evidences that this was the case in the Churches which owed their origin to the preaching of the apostle. In the text we have a clear reference to the fact of Christian fanaticism, and an impressive warning against the danger of unwise action with respect to it.

[1] *Vide* Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 229.

I shall ask you to consider carefully what the apostle says, and to apply it to the circumstances of our own age, and specially—if I may be allowed to claim so much liberty on the first Sunday after the re-assembling of Parliament—to press its counsel on those who are called to the solemn and most difficult task of legislation. "*Quench not the Spirit*," says St. Paul, alluding certainly to those extraordinary exhibitions of spiritual power which illumined and distracted the earliest Church. The "*gift of tongues*," which played so great a part in the Church of Corinth, was exercised also in the other apostolic Churches, and drew to itself a disproportionate measure of Christian regard and admiration. It lent itself but too easily to imitation, and passed but too readily into excessive and dangerous developments. We can understand that wise and observant men would regard with misgiving, which would easily harden into dislike, spiritual phenomena which tended to sink the society of believers to the level of their pagan neighbours. St. Paul, fully conscious as we know he was of the danger of abuse, refuses to sanction an attitude of mere hostility. "*Quench not the Spirit*," is his short and pregnant counsel. He uses a phrase which carries a notable suggestion. These vehement motions are as the flames, which leap upwards in wild freedom while fuel and air are given. They are flames kindled from no earthly hearth, but from the altar of

heaven. "*Quench not the Spirit.*" It is an echo of the reverent caution which once moved his old teacher, the Rabbi Gamaliel, to say to the Sanhedrin of Israel, when they were about to condemn two men accused of religious innovation: "*Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them: lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God.*" When we endeavour to find some counterpart in our own experience to these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, perhaps we may accept some such version of St. Paul's language as this: "Do not be too hasty to stamp out what is novel and alarming, lest you suppress the free movement of genius, and disallow the unconventional methods of enthusiasm." There is an element of divine power in genius and enthusiasm, and it is not fitting that men who believe in an inspiring Holy Spirit, ruling in the affairs of men and wondrously guiding His chosen instruments towards the ends of His providence, should be eager to stamp out movements which may be the effects of His presence. "*Quench not the Spirit.*" From the most prominent and, in some sense, the most suspicious, of religious phenomena, St. Paul passes to another and different manifestation of the Spirit. "*Despise not prophesyings.*" In the Epistle to the

Corinthians we find a striking comparison instituted by the apostle between the "*gift of tongues*" and the "*gift of prophecy.*" The one is private, enriching the spiritual life of the individual Christian; the other is public, bringing advantage to the whole assembly of Christians. The one makes no demand on the intelligence of the believer; the other is an effort of his understanding. There can be no question in St. Paul's mind as to the relative greatness of the gift of ecstasy and the gift of edification. "*He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself: but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church. . . . I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all: howbeit in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. . . . Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.*" If we may paraphrase the apostle's language, I suppose his counsel would run somewhat thus: "Take care that, in the enthusiasm of a religious movement, you do not despise and depress the intellectual activity of the Church. At the moment, indeed, zeal and eloquence may seem to carry all before them, and there needs nothing more than the "*multitude of preachers*" and the fervour of crowded assemblies to conquer the world, but Churches cannot really afford to despise intelligence and to neglect learning.

The "*understanding*" has its place, yea, and a principal place in the religion of Christ, as well as the emotions, though these are not to be crushed, and the imagination, though this is not to be disallowed. "*Despise not prophesyings.*" Having given these comprehensive counsels, the apostle goes on to declare the grand condition of a right handling of religious phenomena. "*Prove (or test) all things.*" "Do not let your sympathy with zeal and experiment be divorced from responsibility. Bring your own mind to bear on whatsoever you are asked to approve. Take nothing at its own valuation; pay no heed to mere authority, or the irrelevant fact of popular preference. Do this service to the Church, that your opinion shall represent a fresh and deliberate application of intelligence to the problems of Christian duty. "*Prove all things.*" And remember that this deliberate, responsible, free exertion of your own private judgment must always be conditioned by two broad considerations. On the one hand, you must distinguish, disentangle, and refuse to abandon the sound core (if there be any) of every movement and every proposal which claims your support. On the other hand, you must be quite relentless against any tampering with Christian principles, and set your face as a rock against any course, however seemingly expedient, which you can clearly see is at bottom morally indefensible. "*Hold fast*

that which is good abstain from every form (or species) of evil."

Such, then, is the advice which St. Paul gives to the Thessalonians at a time of great perplexity, when "*the fountains of the great deep were being broken up*," and the most blessed and permanent of all reformations was beginning to make its presence felt among men. It will not be thought extravagant if I claim for our own age some striking similarity with the age which witnessed the first preaching of the Gospel. An ancient and complex civilization, based on slavery and the supremacy of the State, was then ceasing to justify itself to the minds and consciences of good men. Is it excessive to say of our modern industrial civilization, based on competition and private right, that it is more and more seen to be unsatisfactory and unstable? If that may be conceded, then we have a broad similarity of conditions. Both in the ancient and in the modern world "*the powers of Heaven are shaken*," and men are restless and perplexed, looking for some better solution of the problems of human life than any that the established institutions and hereditary wisdom of society can offer. Both then and now "*the Spirit of God moves on the face of the waters*, and the tokens of His motion are visible in many directions. Ideas are visiting men's minds; change is in the air; movements, religious and

political, are many and perplexing; the task of government is becoming extremely difficult. There is, of course, an immense divergence between the standpoint of St. Paul's age and that of our own. Two millenniums of Christianity have lifted all human affairs on to a higher plane, and the discussion proceeds now on the basis of assumptions which the civilized world received from the hand of Christ, and which it can resign only by an act of moral suicide. I am not suggesting that we are again where men stood then. On the contrary, I believe that there has been great, and, on the whole, unceasing progress, but still it is progress by means of crises, a constant coming of the Lord in history, a series of reformations and counter-reformations, which carry the fates of nations and of individuals. The historian marks some epochs as transitional, and divides men inevitably as men of the past resisting change, and men of the future welcoming and effecting it. Of such transitional epochs the most memorable and the most searching was that which created the modern world in which we are now living. Never, perhaps, in the record of mankind was so great a strain brought upon men as then, when, in the striking words of that learned and profound student (whose literary relics are being given to us by instalments of which the importance bears no proportion to the extent),

Lord Acton, "the world revolved in a different orbit, determined by influences unknown before."[1]

The full consequences of the change were not immediately apparent, and men could not know the gravity of the decisions they were taking, but, as we look back over the 400 years of the modern epoch, we can see how the dividing line fell between the men of the past and the men of the future. It has often occurred to me that the twentieth century has a suggestive similarity to the sixteenth. Both follow a long period of great intellectual activity, in which existing beliefs have been undermined, and the institutions which expressed those beliefs have become apparently anachronistic. Both are marked by great religious activity, and (by a strange and sinister coincidence) by widespread social corruption.

The sixteenth century was a period of transition out of one phase of human society into another. The twentieth century will bear the same character. It is easy thus in a few sentences to indicate an interesting parallel, but think what transition means to those who must experience it. Think what were the stakes in that great game of chance which we call the Reformation; follow the fortunes of the principal actors; trace the vaster fates of the peoples. See underneath the records of history the

[1] Vide *Lectures*, p. 4.

multitudes of personal experiences in which the issue of the time presented itself, and was dealt with inevitably one way or another. Such a time of transition is ours; and even thus inexorably are we all called to determine our place in the grand controversy out of which the future is to come. How pathetically unconscious even the wisest and best of men seem to be, as they are confronted with the questions of their age! How unable to guess the true significance of those questions! How strangely ready to answer them! The retrospect of human action is not encouraging. It is related of the great Bishop Butler, surely one of the sanest and justest of men, that he was wont to walk for hours behind his palace at night, and upon one such occasion suddenly asked his chaplain whether public bodies might not go mad as well as individuals, adding that nothing else could account for most of the transactions of history. That was a melancholy view of the past, yet it will hardly astonish, or seem excessive to, a student of politics. The time came when Bishop Butler was himself confronted by a religious movement, not the least impressive in the long history of the Christian Church. There faced one another the wisest of English bishops and the greatest of English evangelists. What Bishop Butler should judge with respect to John Wesley would have far-reaching consequences on the Church of England.

It cannot be denied that there was much in the preaching of the early Methodists which was disquieting to sober Christians, and, when we recall the tradition of Anglican dread of enthusiasm, which dated from the middle of the seventeenth century, when crown and mitre were down-trodden in a common ruin, we can see that there was much excuse for alarm at the proceedings of the new evangelists. Yet how melancholy it is to find that Bishop Butler could see no farther than the rest of his clerical brethren; that to his large and brooding mind in a great spiritual movement only the transitory excesses of zeal were apparent; that (to quote his own words) "the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Spirit"—in spite of the record of the apostolic age, and the evident sincerity and humility which prompted the belief—was "a horrid thing—a very horrid thing:" that the bishop wished Wesley to leave the diocese, as he had no commission to labour there: that Wesley's earliest experience as an ecclesiastical rebel was gained in resistance to the ill-used authority of Bishop Butler. How different had been the course of English ecclesiastical history if at that juncture the words of St. Paul could have governed the action of the English Bench! *Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.* The mistakes

of great men are perhaps not the least impressive lessons which they teach mankind; and surely where such a man as Bishop Butler could fail, we may well feel ourselves in danger of falling.

It was the special fault of the eighteenth century that there was little sympathy with reforming movements, and a cold welcome for enthusiasm. That certainly is not the besetting sin of our time. To advocate social reformation entailed on the men of that day obloquy and political loss; in our own age there has been a great change. There is no shorter cut to popular favour now than that which the reputation of zeal for social reform provides, and it were hardly extravagant to say that the balance of heroism, if the sign manual of heroism be self-sacrifice, has not infrequently shifted from reformers to their opponents, at least in the political sphere. This, of course, cannot alter the rightfulness of change, or affect the clear duty of every honest citizen to serve the cause of social reform; but it does expose us all to a new and serious danger, and that in two directions. On the one hand, we are apt to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think; to credit ourselves with the moral greatness and independence which have in the past been the characteristics of reformers; and, conversely, to attribute to opponents qualities which did perhaps commonly mark the champions of vested interests in former

times. On the other hand, we are apt to miss the point of the apostle's warning. If in the eighteenth century there was need to emphasize the first part of the text: "*Quench not the Spirit*," since the general stream of opinion was hostile to enthusiasm, it may well be the case —and I confess that I think it is—in the twentieth century that there is greater need to lay stress on the second clause: "*Despise not prophesyings*," for there is a disposition, fostered by many circumstances of the time, to magnify unduly the emotional and sensational elements of public life, and to give too little place to intelligence, knowledge, and experience.

"There are two things which cannot be attacked in front," wrote Lord Acton in one of the private letters which Abbot Gasquet has just edited, and which are full of memorable sayings—"ignorance and narrow-mindedness. They can only be shaken by the simple development of the contrary qualities."[1]

Ignorance and narrow-mindedness are powerful forces in controversy, whether religious or political, and assuredly no party has a monopoly of them. It is perhaps true that knowledge and broad-mindedness are practical disadvantages for the rough conflicts of the hour; but will any man doubt that for the real battle of human interests these are the prime requisites for any lasting and worthy achievement? Could

[1] *Vide* p. 169.

any man entering public life, and setting his shoulder to the tasks of national service in Church and State, adopt as his own a nobler ideal than that which is suggested in the words of the apostle: "*Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil*"? To be sympathetic with new ideas, to be just to new movements, and yet never to underrate the wisdom of the past or to suffer the clear workings of intelligence to be tampered with by emotion and sentiment; to refuse all deference to mere popular clamour, and the less noisy, but more degrading, pressure of personal or party interest, and to form an honest opinion of one's own on the causes which claim one's support; to uphold before the mind, as the governing principle of a true independence, loyalty to every element of moral rightness; to establish, as the law of all social action, resistance to whatsoever hurts the conscience—this is to act as a Christian in public life, this is to carry into society (it makes no matter under what conventional descriptions of political or ecclesiastical usage) the honourable name of Christ.

Is that an impossible ideal of public action? Must compromise—not in the true and necessary sense of fairly recognizing diverse interests in complex practical affairs, but in the false and degrading sense of surrendering principles in order to avoid difficulties—I say, must the

compromise which degrades statesmanship into bartering, and empties public life of virtue, really prevail in human affairs? Are we for ever to acquiesce in the common distinction between the morality of public life and the morality of private life? Are we never to cleanse these words, "political," "ecclesiastical," "controversial," "diplomatic," from the associations of self-seeking, disingenuousness, and uncharity, which now invariably attach to them? It were worth our while, surely, to apply to the course we are taking, whether as politicians or as Churchmen, these searching admonitions of the apostle, himself a hero of transition and one of the world's most illustrious reformers: "*Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.*"

VII

NATIONAL PRIVILEGE AND NATIONAL DUTY

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities."—Amos iii. 1, 2.

1. THESE words are a solemn reminder by the prophet Amos to his countrymen that the privileged position, which they believed themselves to hold among the nations of the world, implied larger responsibility and sterner judgment. It is a very unexpected, and we may be sure a very unwelcome, conclusion that he draws from the divine election of which the Israelites were so proud. Instead of making Jehovah's special favour the foundation of patriotic exaltation, he makes it the foundation of solemn warning. Every reader of the Bible knows how deeply impressed on the Hebrew mind was the conviction of divine choice.

The people of Israel believed themselves to be marked off from all other peoples by the fact that Jehovah had chosen them to be His own people. As the notion of Jehovah's character was cleansed of unworthy elements, and the people thought about Him no longer as a merely tribal God, one among many tribal deities, but as the only God of all the earth, Creator and Judge of all men, their conviction that they were the people of the Lord inspired in them the loftiest hopes of national supremacy. Most part of them never understood the moral teaching of the prophets, nor did they accept the conception of Jehovah as pre-eminently the Author and Guardian of the moral law, "the Holy One of Israel." They made their belief in divine election "the basis for a superstition almost as deadly as any of those which the Israelitish religion was to displace." The nation tended to present that singular combination of religious assurance and immoral practice which was so strange and repulsive a feature of some predestinarian Christians. Against this shocking misunderstanding of the whole meaning of their national election the prophets cried an earnest and continuous protest. It could not be the case that the All-Righteous God, when He deigned to make Israel His chosen instrument, could violate His essential character, or alter His settled will. The fact that to Israel had been given a special vocation, and a knowledge

of the truth which the rest of mankind did not possess, could not possibly lessen their obligation to act righteously, rather it bound them to do so in a very special way, and added to their failure an extraordinary guilt. And just because God was righteous, "*One who would in no wise spare the guilty*," Israel would assuredly be justly punished for its abuse of privilege. "*You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.*"

2. The words of Amos may well serve us for a text to-night, for it is probably the case that almost all of us have been recalling the famous events which have made November 5th one of the festivals of the English patriot's calendar. From 1605 to 1859—a period of no less than 254 years—the day was observed in the churches by special services of thanksgiving, and on these occasions it was the practice of Anglican preachers to make much of the historical memories of the day, and to draw practical inferences from them. I fear it must be admitted that those Gunpowder Plot sermons do not give a very favourable impression of the Christianity of the preachers; they are so filled with religious bitterness, and they breathe the very spirit of intolerance. In 1689 the appointed service was amended in order to include in it a reference of the landing of William III in England. The Reformation, which settled the

question whether or not the English people should work out their destinies as one of the Protestant peoples of the world, and the Revolution, which settled the allied question whether or not the Government of England should be constitutional or despotic, are both combined in the commemoration of this day. I desire, therefore, to take the opportunity of speaking to you about the special responsibility which attaches to our political action in view of the extraordinary advantages which we, as a nation, have been permitted to enjoy.

3. It will scarcely be necessary for me to defend the proposition that we have been, as a nation, singularly privileged. In the fifteenth century Sir John Fortescue, in his well-known treatise on *The Governance of England*, compares the conditions of life in this country and those in France, which in that age was regarded as the natural rival and enemy of England. The comparison is greatly to the advantage of Englishmen. They are shown to be more justly and freely governed, and, in the circumstances of their life, to be far more prosperous. In the succeeding ages the same comparison has frequently been made, and with the same result. I will only suggest two evidences of the exceptional advantages which we have enjoyed. (i) If you travel about England you will be impressed by the astonishing number of stately and beautiful parish churches which

cover the country. When you travel abroad you will be impressed by the comparatively unworthy aspect of the parish churches. What is the explanation of the difference? England has enjoyed an unique immunity from war. Ever since the strong hand of the Norman Conqueror broke the strength of feudal lawlessness—with the exception of the anarchic interval of Stephen's reign—there has been, speaking broadly, a reign of law and order in this country. We have not been called upon to endure such extreme and protracted calamities as those which afflicted our neighbours. The Hundred Years' War with France was fought out in that country, not in ours. We escaped the long-drawn-out conflicts which on the Continent followed the Reformation. We have had nothing in our national experience really comparable with the Hussite wars in Bohemia, the wars of religion in France, the Thirty Years' War in Germany, and, coming to a later time, the wars of the Spanish Succession and the wars of the French Revolution. In most of these we have had our share, but the fighting has been all elsewhere than within our borders. Accordingly there remains to us from the past a vastly greater inheritance of ancient fabrics. What destruction has been effected, apart from the inevitable destruction of time, has been the work of our own hands, and, at the worst times, there has always been an

intelligible reluctance to do more damage than seemed necessary.

(ii) Take another evidence. The liberties of England have been gradually won and developed through many ages; they are not the sudden achievement of some desperate crisis. Our constitution runs back to the distant past, and has its roots in the dim twilight of antiquity. King Edward VII belongs to a royal house which has ruled the English people for one thousand years; the House of Lords represents assemblies which have existed since the dawn of the national history; the House of Commons has an unbroken record of more than six hundred years; the national Church preserves substantially an organization which took shape in the heptarchy; our systems of local government are the lineal descendants, in unbroken succession, of the primitive arrangements by which our Anglo-Saxon ancestors ordered their lives. Our judges have regularly gone on circuit since the reign of Henry II. We have no written constitution, such, for instance, as that of the United States of America, because our constitution has grown, like an English oak, through centuries of storm and stress. Now all this means far more than material for patriotic exultation. English folk have enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a political education which has no equal in any other national experience. Our hereditary passion for liberty

is always tempered and strengthened by an almost equal passion for order. We have little taste for rhetorical commonplaces such as gave distinctive colour to the French Revolution, but we cherish in our hearts

> "A love of freedom rarely felt,
> *Of freedom in her regal seat*
> *Of England;* not the school-boy heat,
> The blind hysterics of the Celt."

In the crises of our history we have been saved from the greatest disasters by a spirit of reasonableness and fair-play, which could only have been gained by a long experience of political life. The Revolution of 1689 is an eminent example. James II was deposed, but the monarchy was not abolished, nor was the hereditary principle abandoned. The great change was effected between personal and constitutional government without any alteration which was not obviously indispensable. The French Revolution had its effect on England, as on the rest of Western Europe, but in England alone the form and fabric of government were unchanged.

4. We realize how great have been our political advantages when we turn our eyes with sympathy and hope to the drama of political revolution which is now proceeding in Russia. What scenes of desperate suffering are daily reported! How difficult seems the way out of tyranny into a liberty which shall be also a

social order! How many are the victims that must perish before the yoke of the bad past is broken, and Russia enters on that course of constitutional government which has been the heritage of England for centuries! I am sure we shall all wish well to that long-suffering, hardly-enduring people. Nowhere in the world is there more sympathy with their struggle for political rights than in this ancient home of freedom.

5. It is in no fanciful or unwarrantable sense that we English folk may take as specially addressed to ourselves the warning of the prophet Amos, "*Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.*"

We, not less than the Israelites, are to understand our political privileges as binding us to political duty in a special degree. This splendid inheritance of ordered liberty is not secure from risk; we have it now, we shall only keep it by effort and sacrifice. After all, the ultimate security even of the strongest fortress must be found in the character of the garrison. The ancient liberties of England, uttered and guarded by the national institutions, may be fitly compared to a strong fortress within which, as garrison, is the English people. If the English

people is sound in its character then the fortress is safe, but only so. Let the national character decline and our security disappears.

6. Now we must be on our guard against using general terms without any practical significance. Nothing is easier, and few things are more popular, than to denounce national vices, but there is no great advantage in doing so, unless the denunciation is felt to come home to individuals as a message from God calling to personal reformation. National character is really a composite of many individual characters. Public opinion is like a great river fed by countless contributions of private opinion. In the last result we must always come back to the individual's obligation, that is, our own duty here and now. And so to-night I wish to give this direct personal reference to all I say, because otherwise I shall only have misspent my labour, and misused your patience.

7. When I reflect on the rise and fall of States I seem to see that there are four principal causes why they come to ruin. These are political faction, social injustice, frivolity, and sensuality. Commonly these are found in combination, but in every case one or other predominates. Political faction destroyed what was once a flourishing kingdom—Poland. Social injustice destroyed the French monarchy, which had long seemed to dominate Europe. Frivolity, an apparently incorrigible aversion

from the graver obligations of citizenship, seems to have rendered the Byzantine Empire and the Republics of Italy helpless in front of their foes. Sensuality played a great, perhaps a principal, part in the overthrow of the Western Empire. These are broad generalizations which need many limitations before they could pretend to correspond closely with the facts of history, but they are broadly true, and will serve sufficiently to point my present argument.

8. It will be worth our while to examine these instruments of disaster more closely. What is political faction? It is nothing else than the setting some lesser allegiance above the supreme claim of patriotism. We in England have for many generations been accustomed to carry on our political life in the grooves of party. There are many advantages in party, and, for certain practical purposes, it may be the case that it is the best political instrument within our reach. But certainly party loyalty may easily usurp a place in our minds which is not reconcileable with patriotism. Party spirit is the besetting sin of English people as citizens, and it would not be difficult to show that the country is gravely injured by its intrusion into national politics. Party organizations are perhaps indispensable, but they are none the less dangerous, and ought to be regarded with the utmost suspicion by good citizens. It needs not that I should elaborate this point, but at a time when

it is universally understood that a general election is near at hand, it cannot be superfluous or unfitting to indicate the danger and wrongfulness of political faction.

9. What is social injustice? It may mean one of two things. On the one hand, it may stand for the unequal treatment of citizens by the law. That was the case in France before the Revolution. Numerous classes of the people enjoyed exemptions from taxation and other privileges, which had the effect of gravely increasing the burdens of the unprivileged masses. I do not think it would be true to say that there is in England social inequality of this kind. On the other hand, the phrase may mean inequality of social opportunity and advantage, and in this sense it cannot be doubted that we are in England seriously threatened by a grave and—as we are authoritatively assured—an increasing social inequality. There is a tendency towards a sharper division of classes. The immense wealth of the princes of modern commerce stands in painful and exasperating contrast with the abject poverty of multitudes at the base of society. The stress and strain of industrial competition are growing severer every year, and none but the intelligent and the vigorous seem to have any chance in the struggle for existence. A very bitter feeling is revealing itself in the unskilled masses who—as the students of social economy assure us—

are living from hand to mouth, with no security of employment, and in very many cases in chronic want. There cannot, I think, be any doubt that a sense of injustice is spreading among the people, and that discontent threatens to express itself in political action. If this be the case, it cannot be denied that in this direction a truly formidable danger threatens the prosperity of the country.

10. What is frivolity? It is the shallow disposition which will not take thought for the graver duties of life, but surrenders itself without reserve to amusements. It needs not that I should remind you of the warnings which have recently been uttered from many responsible and authoritative quarters with respect to this point. We are told, with obvious truth, that the passion for games threatens to destroy all serious intellectual effort among our well-to-do classes; the rapid spread of music-hall entertainments is said, by those who ought to know, to be having a very unfavourable effect on the intelligence of our people; popular newspapers are taking a form very unsatisfactory from the standpoint of serious citizens. Worst of all, the vice of gambling is spreading quickly among all classes, and—as every student of human nature knows—there is nothing so mentally and morally disabling as gambling. If frivolity be a danger to States, then the State of England is seriously menaced.

11. Of sensuality it needs not to speak, since the subject has been recently discussed by bishops and politicians, and is, indeed, well known to every observant citizen. Drunkenness is slaying its thousands, and lust its ten thousands—that is the burden of every witness. Even in the poorest districts, where, as we are assured, there are large numbers of men unemployed, and much acute distress, the bookmakers thrive, and can afford a large discount in the way of fines imposed by an all-too-gentle law. The wastage of national resources in the immoderate consumption of alcohol shows no diminution, and what might be a source of legitimate enjoyment to the working classes is by multitudes changed into an instrument of degradation and disease. Luxury in the wealthier sections of society is daily becoming more lavish, ostentatious, and senseless; and the spectacle of profusion is having widely mischievous effects through the whole nation. I never contemplate this side of our national life without a sinking heart.

12. Faction, injustice, frivolity, sensuality—these are national sins and national foes. Yes, but they are this because they have first been individual sins, and the successful enemies of individual virtue. Here we recover touch with the personal intention which I confessed to control my preaching. There is some advantage in having a large view of national fault

when our object is to take ourselves to task. We are less likely to ride away from our own condemnation on the score of our self-acquittal on one or other of the counts of the great indictment. The total abstainer will not be excused for his party spirit because he is not a drunkard; nor will the frivolous pleasure-seeker escape censure for his frivolity because he can justly claim that he at least is no grinder of the face of the poor. The harsh employer or the tyrannous trade unionist will not free himself from the guilt of social injustice because forsooth he is not frivolous or a drunkard. The sensual man will not gain a verdict at the bar of conscience because he is not also a partisan. "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.*"

VIII

THE TRUE PATRIOTISM BORN OF FAITH

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil."—Zephaniah i. 12.

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible."—Hebrews xi. 27.

THESE two passages, widely separated in point of time and in the temper of thought which they reflect, are yet connected in this respect, that both the one and the other are political descriptions. The prophet Zephaniah is drawing the portrait of the leaders of Jewish politics in the reign of Josiah, probably before the great reformation associated with the name of that sovereign had begun. He himself perhaps belonged to the royal house, for he traces his descent to Hezekiah, whom we may without extravagance identify with the famous king of that name. A whole generation had

passed since the preaching of Isaiah had effected a reformation in the society of Jerusalem, and —as ever happens in the wake of great spiritual movements—there had followed a period of reaction. The upper classes of Judah, from whom the leading politicians were drawn, were exhibiting the too familiar traits of a decadent society. There was much latent scepticism; a tendency to dishonest compromise; a contempt for conviction; a dislike of religion as a factor in practical politics. Together with this decay of the spiritual elements in life there went inevitably a rapid declension of manners, a lowering of the moral standard, a decline of genuine public spirit. Zephaniah had been brought up within the charmed circle of privilege and wealth, and when he was moved to denounce the prevailing tendencies of his class and time, he could speak out of the personal knowledge which he possessed. Hence, perhaps, the lifelike descriptions which he draws, and hence also the almost personal resentment which seems to colour his language. The scorn of the cynic and the moral indignation of the prophet are blended in this warning, and burn on this canvas. It would be hard to find a more scathing, and at the same time a more illuminating, description of a corrupt and selfish governing class than that in the text. "*Men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will*

He do evil"—is it possible to picture more vividly the comfortable obtuseness of gross-living men, and the deep irreligion of self-centred politicians? This, then, is the one description. The other is taken from the account of Moses, which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews includes in his magnificent eulogy on the heroes of faith. It is the very antithesis of the prophet's picture of selfishness and scepticism, for it exhibits a splendid example of patriotism and conviction. "*By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.*" That is the other description.

I shall take leave this morning, on the first Sunday of the first session of a new Parliament, to offer these contrasted descriptions to you as eminently relevant to the time and place of our worship. This church may be said to symbolize the irreducible claim of religion to have its place in politics, for within its walls, for three centuries, the oldest and greatest of free legislative assemblies has been accustomed—

sometimes officially in state, filling the whole church, and sometimes, as to-day, unofficially by those of its members who choose to avail themselves of their traditional right to seats in the Speaker's church—to listen to the preaching of the Gospel, and to join in Christian worship. You will not suspect me of any partisan reference if I remind you that, in some respects, the present Parliament presents a striking resemblance to that most famous of all English Parliaments, to which more than to any other the liberties of England are indebted—the Long Parliament of 1640, which began its eventful course by receiving the Holy Communion in this church. Of that Parliament it has been said by its learned historian, the late Dr. S. R. Gardiner, that none, "since the days of Earl Simon, had ever met with so great a strength of popular support."[1] We may, perhaps, with scarcely less truth, say of the present House of Commons that it represents a unanimity of national feeling almost unprecedented. Both in 1640 and in 1906, the Parliament contains an exceptionally large proportion of new members, and—unless my information on this point be defective—an unusual number of young men. There is an episode in the eventful career of the Long Parliament which fills an important chapter in the history of this church, and, if I recall it to you now, it is because it seems to contribute a

[1] Vide *Hist.*, ix. 219.

remarkably suggestive illustration of the main thesis of my sermon. Let me read to you the contemporary account as it is preserved in the journal of Dr. John Lightfoot, a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, himself an eye-witness of the scene, and an agent in it.

"*September 25th*, 1643.

"This morning being met, we had word presently, after our sitting into Assembly, that the House of Commons was gone to St. Margaret's Church, and so we went after them. And after a psalm given by Mr. Wilson, picking several verses, to suit the present occasion, out of several psalms, Mr. White prayed near upon an hour. Then he came down out of the pulpit, and Mr. Nye went up, and made an exhortation of another hour long. After he had done, Mr. Henderson, out of the seat where he sat, did the like: and all tended to forward the Covenant. Then Mr. Nye, being in the pulpit still, read the Covenant; and, at every clause of it, the House of Commons, and we of the Assembly, lift up our hands, and gave our consent thereby to it, and then went all into the Chancel, and subscribed our hands; and, afterward, we had a prayer by Dr. Gouge, and another psalm by Mr. Wilson, and departed into the Assembly again; and, after prayer, adjourned

till Thursday morning, because of the Fast."[1]

The issues which divided the Englishmen of the seventeenth century so sharply have long ceased to have any practical meaning, and at this distance of time we can agree to recall their action, not as approving or disapproving the specific courses which they adopted, but with respect and gratitude as the heirs of that ordered liberty which, by their efforts and sacrifices, in spite of their failures and blunders, they defended and secured. In this solemn self-dedication of a distressed people, through its constitutional representatives, to the service and to the protection of Almighty God, we have a supreme illustration of that intimate association of religion and politics which gave strength and dignity to the public life of our ancestors. The abiding worth of Puritanism lay not in its theology, which even in the seventeenth century was becoming obsolete, or in its political projects, which were disallowed by experience almost as soon as they were seriously applied in practice, but in the grave, responsible, religious habit of mind which they brought into their political action, and have transmitted as a tradition of the best English public life. It would not be extravagant to apply the phrase of the text to the patriots of the seventeenth century, whether, like Eliot, Hampden, Pym and Ireton, they stood

[1] Vide *Works*, xiii. 15, 16.

with the Parliament against the King, or, like Falkland, Hyde and Verney, they drew sword, when swords were drawn, under the ancient standard of the monarchy. It is never men's honest blunders that endanger their moral witness; it is always their treasons. Of the patriots on both sides it may justly be said that they "*endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.*" For in truth this spiritual vision is the very grace of patriotism, and, when it fails, political action ceases, in principle and tendency, to be patriotic.

The reference to the Long Parliament inevitably suggests the dramatic contrast between the scale of its responsibilities and that of its latest successor. When, indeed, I reflect on the range and variety of the interests committed to the control, almost, it might be said, to the unchecked control, of the British Parliament, and consider the actual circumstances under which that vast responsibility must be sustained, I stand aghast at the contrast which confronts me. The man who for the first time becomes a member of the House of Commons, or for the first time is called to direct the course of its action, must be lamentably shallow and unimaginative if he is not abashed and alarmed at the greatness of the tasks to which he is called. It needs not to recall the difficult problems of government in India and in the Colonies, or the infinitely complicated relationships summed up in the phrase "foreign

policy"—for I suppose it must always be the case that the main burden of all these must bear mainly on the men specifically charged with their management—but it is sufficient to consider the many and often conflicting demands of this nation of more than forty million souls, which are the special and direct concern of the members of the British Parliament. A learned Scotch professor, well qualified to speak on the subject, told me last week that he was inclined to estimate the whole number of the exiles to Babylonia as hardly exceeding fifty thousand persons, and yet their banishment was held to extinguish the nation in its ancient seat. Harnack, in a recent volume, adopts fifty-four millions as a probable estimate of the entire population of the Roman Empire under Augustus. It may be questioned whether the British Islands, at the time when the Long Parliament was accustomed to worship here, included throughout their whole extent as large a population as that which is now gathered within this capital. Such comparisons might be almost indefinitely multiplied; but there is no need. The mere numbers, indeed, give but a faint impression of the facts. Industrial society on the modern scale presents problems of its own, more complex than any which simpler communities, mainly—as was the case with seventeenth-century England—agricultural, provide. The spread of education, and the growing

sharpness of social contrasts, add fresh difficulty to the task of politics. While, however, the scale and perplexity of government have enormously increased, the besetting sins of politicians remain the same; and the old conditions of patriotic political action do not change.

In the language of modern times the message of Zephaniah may be rendered as a warning against materialism, and against its intellectual corollary scepticism. Let us read the text again, as a message directly relevant to our own nation, and therein to ourselves. "*And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.*" In an ancient society organized industrially under modern conditions two facts will stand out with sinister distinctness to the reflective gaze of the political student. On the one hand, there will be a great array of powerful vested interests, entrenched in traditional homage, and strong with accumulations of wealth and sentiment. On the other hand, there will be a great array of urgent popular demands, entrenched ever more firmly in the general conscience, and taking always a more imperative tone, of which none can be satisfied without some disturbance of the equilibrium of vested interests, and few without some considerable diminution of privilege. It will be a hard task to steer an even

course between the exorbitant pretensions on the one side and the indiscriminating appetites on the other, to disentangle the valid moral claims of vested interests from illegitimate privileges, and to disallow in urgent popular movements of opinion demands that are irrational and unjust. The politician will certainly, at the present stage of our political development, be tempted to follow the line of least resistance, make terms with powerful interests or yield to popular clamour, and in one way or the other gather some personal advantage and betray some public trust. "*The men that are settled on their lees*"—who, as things now stand with us, are "in possession" of power and privilege, which ought to be restricted in the general cause; who reckon political forces solely in the scales of class or party, and have a robust contempt for ideas—I put it to you, is it not the case that they count for much in modern politics? The policy of materialism, the cult of force, has this as its creed and the presupposition of its conduct—"*The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.*" In these days, no question, men would phrase their scepticism otherwise. There is as great a multiplicity of expressions of scepticism as of faith, and as it is certainly the case that, as the poet's proverb says—

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds,"

so is it not less certainly true that much dishonest doubt disguises itself strangely in the language of conventional belief. But, for my part, I find the old firm religious phraseology of the prophets more satisfying than any modern substitute I know of. In the last analysis, in spite of all conventional descriptions, and in defiance of all party interests, politicians must take their place in the one category or the other. Phrase the alternative how you will, it always comes back to this, which our Master, Christ, proposed: "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*"; or this, which from another standpoint the great apostle described when he drew his contrast between the "*things which are seen,*" which are "*temporal,*" and "*the things which are not seen,*" which are "*eternal.*"

I ask your forgiveness for speaking even in the most general terms of subjects which, perhaps, are so linked with associations of contention that the mere reference may indispose you to remember the sternly individual intention which ought ever to inspire the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. We are all too ready to turn away from the first and principal duty of personal reformation in order to satirize parties and rebuke descriptions of men. "There is a great complaint in the kingdom," cried Calamy in this church when preaching to the House of Commons at their solemn fast in December

1641. "The ministers complain of their people; the people complain of their ministers. The rich complain of the poor, that they are lazy and thievish; the poor of the rich, that they are proud and hard-hearted. And because every man expects when his neighbour should turn, hence it comes to pass that no man in particular turns. We look for that in another which we forget to do in ourselves. I know no way to reconcile this division but by raising a new division, and by persuading all sorts of people, who should be first in turning to God. . . . Being reformed in our own persons, let us in the next place labour to reform one another." In those days men were apt to neglect the sternly simple obligation of personal righteousness in their eager discussions of theological theories, and the preacher in St. Margaret's warned them that "we must first go to the grammar-school of repentance before we can be admitted to the university of predestination." I would venture to adapt the quaint and pregnant phrase to our present circumstances. The reformer is not qualified for his task until his own spiritual vision has been cleansed. Responsibility is an individual thing, and only by metaphor and in secondary senses may it be attributed to assemblies and associations of men. One of the most serious of the mischiefs of modern society is the tendency to weaken the consciousness of individual duty.

In Church and State alike the scale of effort and the strenuousness of competition have given an excessive and perilous importance to organization. What the party is in the political sphere the denomination is in the sphere of religion: a serviceable, perhaps even a necessary instrument, but one that always tends to claim a greater character. The true patriotism is silently thrust aside by a lower allegiance, and politicians give to the service of their party the kind of loyalty which they owe only to the nation; just as by religious men the interest of religion is sacrificed easily, and even unconsciously, to the nearer and more obvious interest of sect. In both spheres we sorely need a quickening of the individual conscience, a rectification of standpoints and measures, a clearing away of shibboleths and conventions. The singular and incommunicable task of the Church is to strengthen in the citizens the sense of personal duty. "The rule and measure of duty," wrote Cardinal Newman, in words which, though framed in controversy, have become classical,

> "is not utility, nor expedience, nor the happiness of the greatest number, nor State convenience, nor fitness, order, and the pulchrum. Conscience is not a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself; but it is a messenger from Him who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil,

and teaches and rules us by His representatives. *Conscience is the aboriginal vicar of Christ, a prophet in its informations, a monarch in its peremptoriness, a priest in its blessings and anathemas, and even though the eternal priesthood throughout the Church should cease to be, in it the sacerdotal principle would remain and would have a sway.*" [1]

We need not be suspicious of the phrase "sacerdotal principle," for in the context the writer has been at pains to identify his doctrine of the conscience with that held equally by Protestants and Catholics. The task of the Church of Christ, in all its branches, is to strengthen, cleanse, illuminate the individual conscience, and thus to render the greatest of all services to the State. Every conscientious man is a separate fountain of moral influence, and the character of an assembly is ultimately determined by the number of such men it contains. Yes, but to be a conscientious man is not to indulge the cheap privilege of eccentricity, and to gain thereby the facile reward of notoriety; we are sick of the caricature of conscientiousness which has miserably degraded in the general mind the very great and noble plea of conscience. To be a conscientious man is to be committed to a severe and difficult service. In every phase of human life, but

[1] Vide *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, p. 57.

pre-eminently in politics, there emerges, often at short notice, and from the least expected quarter, the conflict between obvious worldly interest and the high, naked, menacing claim of duty. The tempter of men is always at hand with his alluring promise, "*All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me*," and by our side there is none to counsel or to cheer. "*He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible*"—that is the formula of spiritual triumph. "*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even faith.*" And, if we find it hard to make that creed our own, we are pointed to the great Example recorded in the Gospel. In that glorious window,[1] now restored to our sight, and carrying always to our thought so many sacred and moving suggestions, we have the supreme Example of conscientiousness pathetically portrayed. The Crucifixion is much more than this, much more than the triumph of duty in a human life against the worst odds; there is all the love of God and all the redeeming sacrifice of Christ gathered within that mystery of sorrow and patience;

[1] The east window was purchased by funds provided by Parliament in 1758. It was painted in Holland at the start of the sixteenth century, and is an admirable example of Flemish art. Its historic interest is considerable, for it contains contemporary representations of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. The Crucifixion, which is the principal theme of the window, was made the subject of long litigation in the eighteenth century. Two years ago the window was taken out, cleaned, and re-leaded.

but assuredly there is also this, and I may offer it to you to-day, without calling on any of you to read more in the pageant of Calvary. Of Jesus Christ our Lord we may say in fulness of meaning, "*He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible*"; and for the rest of us, when we in our turn trample on obvious and coveted advantages in order to tread alone the narrow path of duty, what needs it to say more than that we stand together with Him, sharing His sorrow and partakers in His victory? "*For the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*"

IX

THE SIN OF SODOM

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good."—Ezekiel xvi. 49, 50.

"Howbeit I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgement, than for thee."—St. Matthew xi. 24.

THE narrative of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain is frequently made the basis of prophetic warnings against the vices of luxurious civilization. An example—perhaps the most famous example—is the passage from the prophet Ezekiel, which I have just read as the text of my present discourse. That passage appears to have been in our Lord's mind when He declared the sin of His contemporaries in rejecting His message to be even graver than that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and said that the final judgment of God would be more severe against Chorazin and Capernaum than

against the traditional victims of divine vengeance.

When Isaiah would rebuke the brazen corruption and non-moral religion of the upper classes of Judah in his day, he bitterly addresses them as "*rulers of Sodom*" and "*people of Gomorrah*." When our Saviour would urge on His disciples the danger of neglecting His solemn warnings of approaching crisis, He says shortly that they are to "*remember Lot's wife*." The author of the so-called Second Epistle of St. Peter follows the regular practice of religious writers when he illustrates his argument about the certainty of judgment, and the care of God for the righteous, by a reference to the story of the guilty Cities of the Plain. I shall, then, be justified by many sacred precedents if I make the narrative, which has been read from the lectern this morning, the basis of some observations about the sins of civilization and their consequences on human life. First, perhaps, I ought to say something of the narrative itself. Is it to be accepted as record of fact? Does it contain any historical element at all? If not, how is it to be regarded? A very few words will suffice to say all that is necessary for our present purpose.

It will be readily admitted that there is no improbability in the narrative as it stands, apart from the moralizations which colour it. That "the destruction of the four cities was a real

event, happening in Abraham's time," appears to Dr. Driver "to be the most probable explanation of the narrative." The difficulty does not exist in the narrative itself so much as in the circumstances under which it has reached us, and the unquestionable fact that it belongs to what might almost be called the common stock of primitive didactic mythology.

> "The truth must be frankly admitted," adds Dr. Driver with his usual candour, "that the narrative was committed to writing—for the first time, so far as we know—1,000 years or more after the events which it purports to describe; and hence the possibility must be faced that it is in fact a legend, intended primarily to account for the desolate and stricken appearance of parts of the shores of the Dead Sea, but at the same time infused with an ethical motive, and told for the sake of the moral lessons which it conveys."[1]

Myths, or semi-mythic legends similar to the narrative before us, are found in many nations, and have been collected by the industry of students to illustrate it. "It is now beyond gainsaying," writes another Oxford professor,

> "that native races, in viewing certain striking phenomena of nature, suggestive of special divine interventions, are led by a mental law, to form mythic narratives

[1] Vide *Genesis*, p. 203.

> respecting calamities which have happened to individuals or to populations under circumstances which in the most widely separated regions resemble each other. The Sodom-story in the traditional text can be in its main features explained as such a mythic narrative, and cannot otherwise be accounted for in any way that is not open to well-founded critical objection." [1]

Let us, provisionally, accept this view, and then ask what lies at the bottom of this tendency everywhere to form such didactic myths, binding together moral transgressions and appropriate chastisements, sin and failure, abuse of property and power, and the loss of both, shamelessness and infamy of perpetual shame. Whence comes that mysterious coercion lying always on human minds, which compels this association of ideas, so that physical catastrophes must always take a spiritual character, and the very rocks and wildernesses be chartered with divine warnings? The answer is not for one moment doubtful. There is that within us, explain it how we may, which sits in judgment on our action, and with unquestioned and unquestionable authority passes sentence on it. "*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord*," said the Jewish sage, and he did but echo the stately teaching of that prophet whose oracle has come down to us in the pages of Micah: "*He*" (*i.e.*

[1] *Vide* Cheyne, in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, iv. 4671.

the Creator Himself) "*hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*" The human spirit itself is prophetic, carrying divine messages of approbation and of censure to the individual; and the activity of this inspired teacher within the human breast stands confessed in the persistent and consistent association of moral transgression with calamity. If we ask how it comes about that this association can survive the changes and chances of time, remaining alive and powerful when its apparent justifications have ceased, when moral standards alter, and creeds fail and pass, so that the primitive legend can still command the wondering assent of the conscience, I suppose the answer must be that human experience does on the whole affirm the suggestions of the human spirit. Whether in the history of individuals or in that of societies, there are courses of action which are properly self-destructive; which, if but they be persisted in, will draw in their train the unfailing Nemesis of decay and dissolution. It is, indeed, impossible to identify, in the absolute way which once seemed easy to serious men, the moral causes which have determined every disaster, whether of the individual or of the State. Christ has once for all disallowed such prompt and confident identification, not only expressly by emphatic

declarations, but even more impressively by the whole process and testimony of His redemptive life on earth. They who acknowledge their true Lord in One who stands in the category of historic estimate as "*the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief*" cannot accept failure and affliction as trustworthy certificates of demerit; and they who are students of human life, especially as it proceeds in the vast and complicated societies of our time, will find themselves baffled at every turn when they seek to establish some direct connection between the sufferings of men and their faults. Moralist and social student are as confident as ever that destruction waits on certain forms of individual and social wrong-doing, but experience makes us more doubtful where the connection will be revealed, and when. Human life is every way seen to be more wonderful and complex the more it is examined; and if it be true to say, as it certainly is, that the action of the human will remains still as always the one fresh, original, incalculable force in the sum of forces which determine events, it is not less true that we are increasingly conscious that the human will acts under subtle and unsuspected coercions of the past and of the present, which make it impossible securely to disentangle in its mysterious working the vital element of freedom. It is impossible for us to associate together the destruction of a city by earth-

quake or some other natural catastrophe and the conduct of the citizens, because we know from experience that to accept that hypothesis would bind us to the impossible task of vindicating a clear relation between morality and fortune, and could hardly fail to bring us to a total disbelief of any divine ruling of the world; but our consciences, and not less our experience, endorse the prophetic doctrine that certain courses of moral transgression are individually and socially fatal, and though we decline to clothe with mysterious meaning the sudden calamities which overtake men and States, yet we, as surely as the prophets, believe in the working of those general laws of morality which, on the broad field of history, vindicate the righteous government of the Almighty. The reflections of the preacher of Israel have often risen on the thought of Christian students of the enigma of life, an enigma never so enigmatic as now, as it faces us in the bewildering confusion of modern communities, so vast, so filled with contrasts, carrying fates so tragic and so many, as no ancient philosopher could even imagine, and we, with deeper sanctions for our faith, can repeat his affirmation, "*and withal I saw the wicked buried, and they came to the grave; and they that had done right went away from the holy place, and were forgotten in the city: this also is vanity. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily,*

therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and prolong his days, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God." The sins of the Cities of the Plain, as they are described by the prophets, are precisely those courses of conduct which the riper experience of modern social students recognizes as socially destructive, and we find ourselves entirely accordant with the prophetic assumption, that the communities which cherished and even vaunted such abominations were divinely doomed and righteously destroyed. Turn now to the text. Ezekiel uttered his message during the exile in Babylonia, and its burden is at once minatory and hopeful. None of the prophets has a deeper consciousness of the fatal effects of the national sins on the competence of the nation to fulfil its ordained task in the world; and his descriptions of those sins is as graphic as his denunciations of them are severe. Along with this clear perception of the moral defects of Israel goes a conception of a revived nation purified and reordered, which has learned the lessons of its misfortunes, and purged its guilt, in the fires of tribulation. In the chapter from which we have taken the text, Ezekiel inveighs against

the sin of the Jews, and compares them to the famous offenders of tradition who, according to the popular belief, had been submerged beneath the sullen waters of the Dead Sea, as a perpetual testimony of the wrath of Jehovah against certain insolent vices. On the north was Samaria, fallen for ever by reason of idolatrous schism; on the south was Sodom, fallen for ever by reason of fault even grosser. Between them stood Jerusalem, proud of its continued life, claiming security of divine favour still, though for the moment affliction had been permitted, and yet containing within itself all the elements of ruin which had been present in its neighbours, the idolatry of Samaria and the vices of Sodom. Thus the prophet addresses his own nation: "*Thine elder sister is Samaria, that dwelleth at thy left hand, she and her daughters: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters. Yet hast thou not walked in their ways, nor done after their abominations; but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast more corrupt than they in all thy ways. As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.*"

Then follows the famous description of the sin of Sodom, which has been already read as a text: "*Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters;*

neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." It is remarkable that the prophet places first in his description, not the abominable sin which proverbially is distinctive of the Cities of the Plain, but rather the social conditions out of which that abominable sin may be said to have grown—"*pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease.*" Similarly, the son of Sirach dwells on the sinful arrogance of the men of Sodom: "*He spared not those with whom Lot sojourned, whom He abhorred for their pride.*" An earlier prophet had denounced the indolent luxury and hardly-veiled unbelief of the Jews: "*It shall come to pass at that time,*" writes Zephaniah, "*that I will search Jerusalem with candles; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.*" Isaiah and Jeremiah dwell on the shamelessness of sin which marked the upper classes of Jewish society on the verge of the great national overthrow, and which suggested the parallel of Sodom. "*The show of their countenances doth witness against them,*" writes the one prophet, adding, "*They declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.*" The other prophet inveighs most against the religious leaders of the corrupt nation: "*They are all of them become unto*

me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah." You observe that always this is the reading of the sin which overthrew the Cities of the Plain. Wealth, inducing pride and social oppression, and these leading on to a dreadful confusion of moral boundaries, making men hideously self-indulgent, and by an inevitable degrading of character and darkening of moral vision, sinking them yet deeper into a shamelessness of wrong-doing, a fearful exultation in the insolence of their filthy sins, which revolts the sound instincts of human nature and calls insistently for judgment—there is the prophetic reading of the history of Sodom and Gomorrah. The terrible words of St. Paul are but a just description of this declension through self-indulgence into the atheism of complete self-subjugation to sin: "*Even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting.*"

"*Pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease*" —these are circumstances of modern life as it proceeds in the great industrial communities of the Western world. When all is said that ought to be said about the suffering and squalor in which a great number of our people are living, it cannot really be questioned that never within human experience, as it is recorded in the annals of civilized mankind, has such a measure

of comfort and enjoyment belonged to so great a portion of the population as that which belongs to the people of Europe and America at the present time. You will not suspect me of forgetting the grievous and in great part remediable evils of that relatively small, but absolutely large, number of persons whose lives from the cradle to the grave are shadowed by want, and all the long train of miseries which follow in the wake of want. Here in London, where the violent contrasts of extreme wealth and extreme indigence are always before our eyes, we cannot possibly forget that melancholy aspect of our social system; nevertheless, I desire to press on your thought to-day the other fact, which affects a vastly greater proportion of our citizens—I mean the unexampled and long-continued prosperity which has eased and softened and perhaps in some cases degraded their lives. The wealthy and idle classes are far more numerous than perhaps ever before; and so rapid has been the development of luxury among us, that wealth can open far more avenues of sensual and sensuous pleasure than in former times. Idleness is more easily concealed by the fussy activities of a frivolous and futile social habit. When we consider the salient features of Anglo-Saxon society, the vast wealth of individuals, the senseless prodigality of the wealthy, the fierce eagerness with which pleasure is pursued, the scarcely-veiled contempt

with which the claims of religion are set aside, the shamelessness of social vices, the deep corruption of life disclosed in whole classes and sections of society—can we hesitate to apply to our own case in England and America the description of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, as it stands on the page of Ezekiel's prophecy? And dare we put away from us, as having no relevance to ourselves, the dreadful precedents of divine retribution which the prophets proclaimed? "*Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.*" On the first Sunday in a new session of Parliament it cannot be unsuitable that our thoughts should be directed to these stern moral laws which in the last result determine the well-being, and even the survival, of communities. Wealth so unequally distributed as is the case in a society which is growing accustomed to the spectacle of single individuals possessing the resources of great States, and spending them in an ostentatious luxury before which the lavishness of the ancients appears moderate and even petty, or in the arrogance of colossal benefactions, which corrupt as by mammoth bribes whole nations, cannot but mean that a great danger is threaten-

ing the national morality, and even bringing into peril the very stability of the State. It is contrary to my custom, and extremely repugnant to my feelings, to violate the frontiers of reticence, and to parade before you the proofs which are quickly accumulating both in England and in America, that the standard of domestic purity is falling, and that even the filthy vices of the Cities of the Plain are again coming to have in human life a position of scandalous prominence. If this be so, then indeed our legislators should bethink themselves of the conditions under which character is formed, and habits accepted, and ideals shaped.

On the first Sunday in Lent we are specially called to a severely honest inquisition into our own lives. We are all too much tempted to move away from the individual aspect of social problems, and in the vastness and complexity of national questions to lose sight of the lines of personal responsibility. Perhaps this is in some sense the besetting sin of politicians, with whom necessarily rests the duty of determining how far, and in what modes, the morals of a people may by sound legislation be guarded and cleansed. It is, however, the individual aspect of national problems which here, in the house of God, must always be mostly insisted upon. When all is said about State action we come back to the unquestionable fact that the wisest laws must be administered, and that for

their regular and righteous administration two things are indispensable—a sound and vigilant public opinion, and honest, high-minded, pure-living, clean-handed administrators. In the discipline of individual lives lies the final security for the cleansing of national morals, and when that discipline is in question the State must stand aside, and give place to another and a more awful Authority, the Spirit of God witnessing in men's consciences and crying a public testimony in the Church. I pray you bring all things in the first place to this personal issue. What are you yourself contributing by the manner of your own life, and the ordering of your own household, to the general morality? Reason and modesty add their confirmation to the humbling, yet in the long run most stimulating, statement of the moral obligation of the individual, which our Lord addresses to us; and His words may well sum up for every one of us the teachings of this day: "*Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*"

X

JUSTICE

(SERMON PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY)

"Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter."—Ecclesiastes iv. 1.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—St. Matthew xxii. 39.

November 5, 1605—just 300 years ago—was a notable day in England. The news of a great deliverance ran like wildfire through the streets of London. In the evening all the bells were ringing, and the sky was reddened with the bonfires which were blazing in every street. It was the first Guy Fawkes Day. In Westminster Abbey, we may fitly observe, the day had another interest, for a new Dean, Richard Neile, was installed. One of the first Acts of the new Parliament was to pass a Bill ordering that November 5 should be kept as a day of thanksgiving for ever. For more than two centuries and a half that Act remained in force,

and services were held in the churches, at which sermons were preached with special reference to the historical commemoration. Those Gunpowder Plot sermons form a voluminous literature, the most melancholy and futile in the world. A generation ago the Act was repealed when "the service which was originally the outpouring of thankful hearts had long become an empty form."

Looking back now, after an interval of three centuries, we can see that the guilty conspirators of 1605 were almost as much sinned against as sinning. Their great crime had been provoked by great wrongs, and though nothing could possibly justify their conduct, yet its infamy must be shared by those who goaded them into it. If any one of us be disposed to indulge the facile sentiment of religious intolerance because this day's historical reminiscence seems to permit the notion that, at least when Roman Catholics are in question, we may plead political excuses for unequal treatment of fellow-citizens, I would ask him to reflect on the miserable chapter of national history which contains the record of the so-called Popish Plot. Let me read to you the description, which a recent historian of that melancholy episode has given, of the treatment to which the Roman Catholics were at the time subjected, and let me ask you to set together in your thoughts the exasperating memory of the Gunpowder Plot of James I's

reign and the humiliating memory of the Popish Plot of Charles II's.

> "All over the country," writes Mr. Pollock, "the prisons were filled, houses of Roman Catholics searched for arms, their estates confiscated. Fourteen men were executed for high treason in the plot, three for Godfrey's murder. Eight Catholic priests suffered on account of their orders under the statute of Queen Elizabeth which made it treason for a subject to take orders from the Church of Rome and, returning to England, to remain there upwards of forty days. Five died in prison. Thirty more were condemned to death, but were reprieved, and of those sixteen died in confinement. The actual figures are enough, but they do not complete the tale of suffering. Nothing is told by them of the persecution less than death, the harrying of men and women for conscience' sake, the cruel blight fallen on the lives of hundreds because of the crimes and follies of intriguers who turned religion to be an affair of politics. . . . On all sides the lot of Catholics was pitiable. Those in London who were not imprisoned were banished from the capital. As many as thirty thousand were said to have fled. In the country fresh persecution awaited them. . . . Houses of eminent Catholics all over

the kingdom were searched and searched again, and sometimes almost destroyed by the efforts of officers to find hidden priests. Catholic merchants found themselves bankrupt. Everywhere Catholics were driven from home and livelihood, reduced to beggary. . . . Those in prison had nothing on which to subsist but the charity of friends. Seized at inns, in secret retreats, on beds of sickness, they were hurried through rain or snow to dreadful cells, without money or a sufficient supply of clothes. . . . Many were reduced to the greatest distress. Some even died of want. Priests, hunted from one to another more painful hiding-place, were put to every shift to evade capture. For days they lay, cramped and hungry, in holes within walls, behind chimneys, even fastened up beneath tables, while their pursuers tore up the floors, broke down the walls, dug up the garden walks, within a few yards of them. When they ventured forth to escape, it was in the depth of winter, through ice and mud, and in the teeth of midnight storms."[1]

It is an agreed point among historical students that all this mass of persecuting violence was the direct result of political panic operating on the most vehement religious prejudice. When, therefore, as on this day, we are called to

[1] Vide *The Popish Plot*, p. 198.

reawaken in our minds the antipathies of the past, and to keep alive the recollection of Roman Catholic treason, I submit that it will be a salutary thing for us to call back to memory the extreme provocations under which that treason was perpetrated, and the shameful violences by which it was avenged.

There is another historical reminiscence belonging to November 5, which we may well recall to-day. It was on November 5, in the year 1688, that William of Orange landed at Brixham on that expedition which stands in our national annals as the first chapter of the revolution to which we owe the inestimable heritage of our constitutional liberties. Again there was a conflict between the Church of Rome and the English people. Another count was added to the long indictment which Protestant England prefers against the political activities of Roman Catholicism. Unhappily the former error was repeated, and the revolution settlement brought with it that shameful penal code against Roman Catholics which for more than a century lay so heavily on the reputation of our country. Our thanksgiving for national liberty, restored by the heroic prince from over-sea, who sleeps within these walls in a grave still—after two centuries—unmarked by the monument which was ordered by the Parliament of the time, must take a quasi-penitential character when we remember the long story of

religious oppression in England, and still more in Ireland, which continued into the life-time of Englishmen still living, and perhaps can even now hardly be said to have wholly ceased. Some of you will remember the noble scorn with which Edmund Burke exposed the hollowness of the pretence that this policy of oppression was politically necessary.

> "If," he wrote to his son in a letter on "Protestant ascendency in Ireland," "if Protestant ascendency means the proscription from citizenship of by far the major part of the people of any country, then Protestant ascendency is a bad thing, and it ought to have no existence. But there is a deeper evil. By the use that is so frequently made of the term, and the policy which is engrafted on it, the name Protestant becomes nothing more or better than the name of a persecuting faction, with a relation of some sort of theological hostility to others, but without any sort of ascertained tenets of its own upon the ground of which it persecutes other men."[1]

Perhaps you will be disposed to resent my bringing back to mind these episodes of the past. We have renounced—you will say—the persecuting policy of our ancestors, and we no longer desire to maintain any Protestant ascendency in Ireland, or elsewhere, which

[1] Vide *Works*, vi. 393.

involves the violation of civic equality. It is surely superfluous to bring before us the disgraceful precedents of an earlier time. I shall answer in the words of an eminent Roman Catholic, who stood in the forefront of historical students. "The reward of history," wrote the late Lord Acton, "is that it releases and relieves us from present strife."[1]

I do not wish you to think that I am forgetful of the justifications which our ancestors could plead for their intolerance. It would argue a wilful misreading of history not to admit that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Roman Catholic Church was a formidable and an unsleeping foe to the liberties of England. In the measured words of the most impartial of historical writers, S. R. Gardiner, that Church "was pledged to change the moral and intellectual atmosphere in which Englishmen moved and breathed." "Neither freedom of thought nor political liberty had as yet reached their perfect development in England, but it was beyond doubt that the victory of the Papacy would extinguish both." Dr. Gardiner lays it down that "the one condition which renders toleration possible is a sense of security; either from the overwhelming strength of those who have the power to persecute, or from the existence of a general opinion adverse to the employment of force in the suppression of opinion."[2]

[1] Vide *Letters*, p. 130. [2] Vide *History of England*, i. 231.

Neither of these conditions of security existed in England in that age, and therefore we may not deny to the authors of the penal code a large measure of excuse. Looking back, with the advantage of subsequent experience to assist us, we can see that the indiscriminating severity with which all Roman Catholics—loyal and disloyal alike—were treated by the laws was a grave political mistake. An anonymous Baptist writer pointed this out as early as 1615, within ten years of the Gunpowder Plot. His words are worth quoting:—

> "And for the Papists, may it not justly be suspected that one chief cause of all their treasons hath been because of all the compulsions that have been used against their consciences, in compelling them to the worship practised in public, according to the law of this land; which, being taken away, there is no doubt but that they would be much more peaceable?"[1]

We have lived to demonstrate the truth of this opinion, and we have learned at last that however incompatible with good citizenship the Roman theory may be, yet in practice Roman Catholics may be just as good citizens as their Protestant neighbours. As long as they were oppressed they were disloyal; when the oppression ceased, the disloyalty ceased also. It is oppression that drives mad even a wise man.

[1] Vide *English Religion in Seventeenth Century*, p. 221.

Look over the world at this moment, and take a view of the heavy yokes which men are groaning under. Could the student of our own time find words better suited to express his thoughts than these of the Jewish sage: "*Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter*"? It will not be thought unfitting if on this anniversary of English liberty, in this sacred home of English national memories, where for many generations the monarchs of England have confessed the solemn and searching truth of their obligation to rule in righteousness, an English preacher should utter the prayer that the gracious boon of civil freedom may at length be granted after the long night of oppression to the noble and patient Russian people.

"*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" I have chosen these words of our Master, Christ, as giving us, in a sentence, the principle of genuine justice." "*If*," says St. James, "*ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin.*" If we want a sound practical rule by which to determine what justice requires of us with respect to others, we have it here. Let

us imagine a reversal of positions by which we are in their place, and they in ours. What should we claim for ourselves in that case as just? That is what we must be ready to yield to others when they seek justice from us. Carry that rule into the government of home. Let it determine the conduct of husbands towards their wives, and of fathers towards their children; there will be an end of that oppression which now embitters family relationships in so many households, and casts so dark a shadow over so many homes. Conduct your business on that basis. Try to put yourself in the place of your employer or your servant, as the case may be, and see what appears to be just then. You are yourself ordained to be the exponent of moral obligation, the interpreter of other men's claims. This is the rule of justice: "*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also the same unto them.*" *Carry that rule into your politics*, and determine your political decisions by its aid. That is the condition of tolerance and fair-play. At first sight, perhaps, some may feel a sense of disappointment at the modest, almost commonplace, aspect of Christ's doctrine, very unlike those demands of self-annihilating altruism which generous enthusiasts are apt to delight in, or those stern counsels of asceticism which ever fascinate the gloomier-natured devotees. In truth our Saviour recognizes the legitimate sphere of the self-regarding instincts

of human nature. He builds His moral doctrine on an accurate diagnosis of the facts to be reckoned with. The claims of self are allowed validity, and constituted, if I may put my meaning in this way, the guarantors of the other claims, which self may easily ignore or disallow. A just measure of what is due to one's own self shall provide, what otherwise were not provided at all, or at least not with adequate authority, a just measure of what one owes to others. The core of the practical problem is precisely the correlation of the claims of self and the claims of others. To cut the Gordian knot by sacrificing one or the other is comparatively simple, and, inasmuch as to sacrifice one's own claims is very repulsive to human nature, the most part of men prefer the other alternative. Not of course that such sacrifice is really possible in any completeness, since, whether we remember it or not, it is the fact that we are members one of another, and cannot possibly live in isolation. But with respect to all that large part of conduct which is under our own control, we can, if we will, take as the principle of action our own selfish interests. This is what is meant by the cant phrase you will often hear on the lips of ordinary folk: "Looking after No. 1;" "Every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost." An impartial observer might conclude that it was the accepted principle of competitive commercialism. Class morality is

but one degree removed from mere egotism, and here also a one-sided view of social obligation prevails. Jesus Christ takes account of both sets of claims, and inasmuch as the claims of self must be primary, He starts with them. "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*" is the conclusion of an argument of which the premises are the legitimacy of self-love and the competence of self-love to interpret social duty.

Perhaps some one will object that this is an impracticable counsel, that no man could really put it in practice in such a world as that in which we are living. I shall answer by pointing out that, in actual experience, men's treatment of themselves does truly reflect itself in their treatment of others, so that, by observation of human behaviour in society, one may infer with fair security what theory of their own personal claims men are holding. It has, for example, often been observed by keen students of human nature that there is a close connection between sensuality and cruelty, so that you may be fairly confident that a profligate will be also hard-hearted, and certainly may assume the complementary combination of self-respecting purity and generosity. At first sight this may seem a hard saying, for is it not the case that self-indulgence commonly affects a large tolerance of all lapses from virtue? and are not boon companions distinguished by a liberal heartiness

of manner which seems to promise the largest degree of kindliness? Yet I am quite content to appeal to the general experience. Get behind the hearty manner and the cheery recklessness of the drunkard, the gambler, and the profligate, and you will come upon an adamantine selfishness which stops short at no cruelty in order to secure its miserable ends. Now mark what this means. The theory of his own manhood which determines the action of the sensualist is a very low theory. In his own case it permits him to ignore all the higher claims of his manhood, and to sacrifice everything to the lowest appetites. In the case of others he, unconsciously but inevitably, applies the same theory of manhood. He tramples on all their higher claims also, and only takes account of the lowest uses which they can serve. His selfishness begins by degrading his own self, and then makes that degraded self the measure of all men. Our Saviour seems to be declaring one of the great fundamental statutes of human life when He says to every one of us: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" You cannot set limits to the morality which, in the first instance, must be practised with respect to yourself; what you do to yourself will surely be the precedent of what you do to others. The secret of all social wrong-doing is always some heresy of the individual life, and we are ourselves the key to our conduct.

Especially, perhaps, are our Saviour's words applicable to matters of conscience. Why is it that persecutors are always either superstitious or cynical—men, that is, who have surrendered their consciences to some external authority, or men who have frankly subordinated conscience to some lower interest? It is precisely because they cannot escape from the mysterious necessity to make themselves the first examples of their theory of conscience, because they must, being men, deal out to the consciences of other men the same treatment as they deal out to their own.

I would venture to hope that, without my assistance, you will give a practical application to what I have said. This day—as I reminded you at the beginning of my sermon—brings to us memories of exasperation. It had been easy for me, and I know well it had been popular, to follow in the footsteps of so many preachers on this commemoration by making my discourse a denunciation of Papal intolerance and Jesuit intrigue. I have preferred to speak of oppression, and of that justice which we all owe to one another, and which we are all so slow to yield. In truth it is high time that we settled it with ourselves whether we are really zealous for justice, or not. Great social questions are being stirred which will not be laid to sleep without answer. If history be any guide to the future, then we are to

expect in the wake of the events, which are opening a new epoch in the annals of the Slavonic race, far-reaching consequences for the rest of Christendom. Inevitably we have all been comparing stage by stage the events of the revolutionary drama in Russia with those of the Revolution in France more than a century ago. We know how the fire spread then from land to land, until all Europe was ablaze. It will be very astonishing if the triumph of social democracy in Russia does not give an immense impetus to the forces of social change throughout Europe. I look to see a new urgency in the claims of those classes of society which, in many of the incidents of their lot, account themselves, not altogether without reason, oppressed. What shall be the attitude of the upper and middle classes when the artisans stand out, as it were, in battle order, claiming what they describe as their rights? Who shall determine between the competitors in the struggle for the heritage of civilization? Who shall fix the limits of justice between classes and descriptions of men? Ultimately the answer to all such questions must turn on the single issue, how far Jesus Christ's "Golden Rule" has entered the minds of men, and become the law of their thinking, and the standard of their practice: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." I may not forget that we are drawing near to one of those recurrent periods

of our constitutional life when the nation puts hand to the most solemn of its political tasks. Before this anniversary returns we shall have exercised our ancestral rights as a free nation, and in a general election decided to which of the great parties we shall entrust the destinies of England. Here, in the house of God, we have no concern with any partisan interests, and our handling of political issues has no partisan suggestions. Above and beyond party stands the everlasting interest of righteousness. Political debate and conflict will lose much of their bitterness, and all of their insincerity, if we enter into them as religious and responsible men, seeking in everything first the "*kingdom of God and His righteousness*," and seriously trying to set ourselves free from narrow and unworthy views. There are two sides to every question in which human interests conflict; there are prejudices of person, of party, of class, of church, of creed, which—because they are prejudices—do not minister to fair-play; in politics, as in religion, it is the case that "*the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*" We can all do something to raise the level of political discussion, and to restrain the too facile excesses of political passion. We can ourselves be just, and the champions of justice.

XI

FANATICISM

(PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY)

"When they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."—Acts xix. 34.

"I fought with beasts at Ephesus."—1 Corinthians xv. 32.

THESE are descriptions of an outburst of fanaticism, the one by an historian recording the facts, the other by a victim relating his experiences. I propose to ask your attention this afternoon for a brief consideration of fanaticism, not only because the subject is itself interesting and important, but also and chiefly because we ourselves are exposed to the risks of fanatical excitement, and may well be reminded of the need of vigilance if we are to avoid the folly and injustice to which fanaticism never fails to conduct men.

The narrative of the riot in Ephesus, occasioned by St. Paul's vigorous and successful preaching of the Gospel, deserves the most careful examination, as well from the standpoint of the historian of Christian origins as from

that of the student of morals. This is one of the most "modern" scenes described by the sacred writers; it hardly needs comment to make it entirely intelligible to those who, like ourselves, are familiar with life in a great city. Let me set the facts before you. Ephesus was at this time possessed of a threefold primacy among Oriental cities. It was, first, "the greatest emporium of Asia." It was, next, "the centre of Roman administration in Asia." It was, thirdly, the "centre of the magical arts of the East," and a famous "holy city." The shrine of Artemis, situated "at the very gateway of the East," had become the scene of an eclectic worship in which Hellenic and Semitic elements were strangely blended. The cultus of the Ephesian Artemis thus received an œcumenical character which conferred on the city an international importance. Around the temple of the goddess had grown up a cluster of interests, religious, semi-religious, and frankly secular. There was a great trade in relics and objects of devotion; there was another great trade concerned with the feeding and housing of the immense hordes of pilgrims which flocked from all parts of the East to the sacred city. The temple officials of all grades formed a numerous and influential part of the resident population. Religion, then, was extremely powerful and extremely mundane in Ephesus. The fervours which expressed themselves in

the splendid worship had their origin in curiously-mixed motives. It would be hard to say what dictated the ardent piety of an Ephesian devotee, whether his religious conviction, or his political attachment, or his business interest. When the Gospel of Christ was effectively and continuously preached in the city, and considerable numbers of the Ephesians and the pilgrims from Asia began to fall away from the dominant worship, the fact had an obvious political and commercial significance, as well as a religious. "The most sensitive part of 'civilized' man is his pocket," it has been truly observed. In Ephesus the first outburst of violent resentment against the religion of Christ was occasioned by the injury which that religion inflicted, or was believed to inflict, on men's pockets. Christianity "threatened to extinguish some ancient and respectable trades, and promised no compensation; and thus all the large class that lived off the pilgrims and the temple service was marshalled against the new party, which threatened the livelihood of all."[1]

Prominent among the manufacturers of Ephesus was "*a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines of Diana.*" This man set himself at the head of a movement of protest. Gathering the members of the allied trades together, he ad-

[1] *Vide* Ramsay, *St. Paul*, p. 277.

dressed them in a speech in which the religious and the secular objections to the new religion were adroitly blended. Alarm for their trade was combined with zeal for their goddess and pride in their city. "*Not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.*" This adroit appeal was immediately successful. An explosion of fanaticism followed. "*When they heard this, they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre. . . . Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.*" At this stage the Jews, probably a numerous, wealthy, and unpopular community at Ephesus, thought well to make an effort to dissociate themselves from the Christian preachers, who were still by the general opinion of Ephesians associated with them. The appearance of Alexander, a well-known member of the Jewish colony, with this object, only provoked more disturbance. "*When they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*" Finally, the town clerk

succeeded in stilling the tumult, by raising the spectre of political danger. This is the historian's account, and it abundantly justifies the description of the Ephesian mob which the apostle gives in the sentence, "*I fought with beasts at Ephesus.*" The description is worth noting for the light it casts on the speaker. It is "an interesting mixture of Greek and Roman ideas, and corresponds well to Paul's mixed education, as a Roman citizen in a Greek philosopher's lecture-room. In the lecture-room he became familiar with the platonic comparison of the mob to a dangerous beast; and amid the surroundings of the Roman Empire he became familiar with the death-struggle of criminals against the wild beasts of the circus."[1]

The fanatic is almost always swayed by motives which are mixed, and which he does not discriminate. These Ephesian craftsmen were in their own eyes religious zealots, but their zeal was in no slight measure dictated by considerations which are remote from religion. "See," comments St. Chrysostom, "how wherever there is idolatry, in every case we find money at the bottom of it." If for "idolatry" we substitute "fanaticism," I am disposed to think we shall not be far from the truth. It is when material interests have clothed themselves with sacred names, and religion has come to be identified with some established institution or popular

[1] *Vide* Ramsay, i. 230.

practice, that the malady of fanaticism most easily lays hold of the mind. Hence "fanaticism" is the parasite of popular movements, for the mass of men are ill equipped for the task of analyzing motives, and accustomed to be swayed by large and obvious pleas, which are never so moving and persuasive as when they unite in a single argument the appeal to self-interest and the appeal to the conscience. The wisest political philosophers have regarded with alarm the facility with which the multitude can be moved to vehemence and passion. "Of all things," wrote Burke, "wisdom is the most terrified with epidemical fanaticism, because of all enemies it is that against which she is the least able to furnish any kind of resource."[1] It may indeed be fairly argued that Christianity, being the religion of humanity, enters into all relationships of human life, and is associated with all human interests, so that it is impossible to sever religious from secular concerns. This must be admitted to be true, but it is not the less true that the connection between Christianity and common life does sometimes take a special character. There are cases in which obvious worldly interest, commercial or political, points in the direction in which our religious preferences also point, and then there is a great danger of our carrying over unconsciously to the credit

[1] Vide *Works*, iii. 435.

of religious conviction what really has its origin in selfish interest. A reformer possessed of abbey lands, for example, may be conscientiously convinced of the anti-evangelical character of monasticism; but it must be allowed that his arguments to that effect are apt to be both more vehement and less morally impressive on account of their relation to his personal interest. A supreme pontiff may be conscientiously convinced that he possesses the power to issue indulgences, but his arguments will lose force from the circumstance that indulgences are for him fruitful sources of revenue. The suggestion is, that we ought to be specially suspicious of our own motives whenever material or political interests coincide with what appear to be religious duties. The blend of zeal and advantage is always extraordinarily suspicious.

Notice next, that the violence of fanaticism bears little relation to the intrinsic importance of the issues at stake. A fiction can be just as inflaming as a fact; the most trivial matter will serve to kindle those fierce fires as well as the most serious. In one of his *Letters from a Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith tells the story of the contending friars, whose strife threatened a civil war, and who were persuaded to submit their controversy to the decision of a miracle. The written cases were to be solemnly committed to the flames, and that which was unburned should be accepted as proved. "In-

credible were the numbers that were gathered round upon this occasion; the friars on each side approached, and confidently threw their respective legends into the flames, when, lo! to the utter disappointment of all the assembly, instead of a miracle, both legends were consumed. Nothing but thus turning both parties into contempt could have prevented the effusion of blood. The people now laughed at their former folly, and wondered why they fell out."[1] Perhaps it may be said that the pleasant essayist was exhibiting the characteristic fault of his age, when he thus scoffed at the vehement conflicts of religious men; and I will not deny that there is justice in the comment, but, when all is said, it cannot be denied that one of the mischievous effects of surrendering our minds to fanaticism is the losing of all sense of proportion; small things are fought for as if they were fundamental principles, and men keep no measures in their reasoning. It is in thus disturbing the sense of proportion that the intrusion of alien interests is so peculiarly baleful in religious discussions. That "no man is competent to be judge in his own cause" is a truism which may well be kept in mind by disputants; and we know who it is from whose lips came that grand and difficult canon of criticism, which disallows the worst kind of fanaticism, and cleanses controversy of

[1] *Vide* Letter cx.

all its bitterness, by compelling it to be completely sincere: "*Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*"

While thus fanaticism is often built on a sinister blend of worldly interest and religious zeal, and always involves a loss of a due sense of proportion in the estimate of things, it must be added that it is always violent in procedure, and never fails to bring discredit to its own cause. The violence of fanaticism is proclaimed by many a scandalous page of human history, and it arises from two causes. The voice of reason is inaudible amid the clamour of an excited multitude, and the strength and volume of popular movements are beyond the control of reasonable men, even if such exist to make the attempt. There are some notable words of Edmund Burke on this point, which I would respectfully commend to the consideration of our ecclesiastical and political leaders at this time:—

> "There is in all parties, between the principal leaders in Parliament and the lowest followers out of doors, a middle sort of men, a sort of equestrian order, who, by

the spirit of that middle situation are the fittest for preventing things from running to excess. But indecision, though a vice of a totally different character, is the natural accomplice of violence. The irresolution and timidity of those who compose this middle order often prevent the effect of their controlling situation. The fear of differing with the authority of leaders on the one hand, and of contradicting the desires of the multitude on the other, induces them to give a careless and passive assent to measures in which they never were consulted; and thus things proceed, by a sort of activity of inertness, until whole bodies, leaders, middle-men, and followers are all hurried, with every appearance and with many of the effects of unanimity, into schemes of politics, in the substance of which no two of them were ever fully agreed, and the origin and authors of which, in this circular mode of communication, none of them find it possible to trace. In my experience I have seen much of this in affairs which, though trifling in comparison to the present, were yet of some importance to parties; and I have known them to suffer by it. The sober part give their sanction at first through inattention and levity; at last they give it through necessity. A violent spirit is raised, which the presiding

minds after a time find it impracticable to stop at their pleasure, to control, to regulate, or even to direct."

Burke proceeds to dwell on the disastrous effect of a disturbed imagination in politics. He was writing, you will remember, under the strong excitement of the French Revolution, but his language has abiding relevancy to popular politics. His plea for vigilance against the violent and unmanageable spirit of fanaticism can never be out of date. Look back on the history of religious fanaticism in this country and mark how constant has been the association of violence and discredit. The ultimate loser in every outburst of fanaticism has been religion. What did Anglicanism finally gain by the fanatical agitation which gave Sacheverell a place in our history, and stained the Statute Book with the latest expressions of Stuart intolerance? What did Protestantism gain by connecting itself with the insane fanaticism of Lord George Gordon? These are extreme examples, but they will serve. "*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*," says St. James, and his words may well stand as the moral of the history of fanaticism.

There are, perhaps, special reasons why fanaticism should be watched and resisted by men of our time. The conditions under which we live and carry on our political and religious controversies are peculiarly favourable to fanatical

tendencies. Consider but two points. The unprecedented extent of a modern State such as ours brings into the discussion of every question the difficult and distracting element of great numbers. There is something about mere multitude which is unfavourable to accuracy of expression, to calmness of temper, and to courtesy of method. The necessity of making one's case intelligible to the least intelligent, of setting it out in the most effective form, of bringing to its support the most powerful sentiments, which are always the least rational—all these make for the same result, and that is neither just, nor considerate, nor wise. Then the diffusion of just so much education as makes possible political discussion, and stimulates the desire to take part in it, involves the fact that discussion is carried on with little knowledge and great assurance. There is no more melancholy literature in the world than the literature of current political and religious controversy as it is produced, almost from day to day, for the service of the combatants. It commonly carries all the marks of fanaticism — vehemence of statement, narrowness of vision, inability to see both sides of a question, incapacity to be fair. Agitation is a common, perhaps an inevitable, instrument of democratic politics, but how easily does it serve the purposes of fanaticism; how naturally does it stir passions which are as irrelevant as they are uncharitable; how readily

it purchases effectiveness at the price of truth, and silences reason by clamour. Agitation, carried on with the means provided by modern civilization, is a facile and dangerous weapon in any man's hand, and not lightly to be used by any man who is thoughtful and fair-minded. Like a tiger, popular feeling is gentle at the beginning, but when grown becomes an ungovernable force.

> "We guide affairs," says Montaigne, "in their beginnings, and have them in our own power; but afterwards, when they are once at work, 'tis they that guide and govern us, and we are to follow them."[1]

This is not merely true of great public movements which have taken a fanatical character and passed beyond the guidance or control of those who too lightly started them on their disastrous course, but it is true of the individual within the limits of his own experience. No man can safely surrender himself to his emotions, or his preferences, or his prejudices, without putting in jeopardy the balance of his nature, and endangering his own self-control. Every one of us is the microcosm of humanity; within the republic of our own individual being exist and operate the forces which fashion history. Agitation within the mind may upset its standards of right and wrong, and unchain the wild beasts

[1] Vide *Essays and Letters*, iv. 157.

of passion. When we find that we can see no good at all, no justice, no reason, in proposals and procedures which to other men, not less well qualified than ourselves to judge on such matters, appear to be fair and reasonable, we need be in no doubt as to the danger in which we are standing. We are beginning to think fanatically. If we find that we cannot discuss with temper any question, we are assuredly becoming fanatical. Moreover, if the questions which agitate us are those in which we are well aware that our interests, or our strong preferences, or our religious emotions and convictions are concerned, then certainly we have great reason to pray for protection against this fatal and criminal malady of fanaticism, the curse and shadow of zeal, and from age to age the bane and shame of religion. I do not care to press the application of all this to our current controversies, political and religious; I am very sure that there is no party or cause among us which is not weakened and discredited by the fanatical spirit which marks its members and advocates. I am not less sure that the remedy of fanaticism must be sought here in the sanctuary, where fanaticism too often receives its most disastrous expression. Religion, learned in its purity at the feet of Jesus Christ, is the antidote of fanaticism. The tree which carried the Crucified bears leaves which, cast into the marah streams of human

conflict, can heal and sweeten them. Controversy, brought in prayer and penitence to the foot of the Cross, becomes transmuted into a holy discipline, and Christian men, humbly bringing to the service of duty their best thought and their least selfish effort, discover that there is a mysterious solidarity of true men which overrides the sharp-edged formulæ of parties and Churches, and knits hearts together in a common worship of Him, in whom for our salvation and for our example the divine justice revealed itself as all-saving, all-embracing charity.

XII

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

(PREACHED IN GLASGOW CATHEDRAL)

"Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times."—St. Matthew xvi. 3.

"And this, knowing the season, that now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep."—Romans xiii. 11.

1. HUMAN history is not a dead level. There are times and seasons, epochs of revival and days of decline, days of grace and days of vengeance. The student of the past gazes on a varied landscape, full of lights and shadows, with a background of great mountains, impassable and unexplored, and a foreground crowded with incident. It is not at all the case that one age is as good as another, nor is it a matter of indifference when, in the course of the world's life, men are called to live. The Bible everywhere contradicts so tame and unworthy a conception of history. The quality of our time—so we are clearly taught to think—is either a great blessing or a great misfortune. Moreover, it is of real importance

that we should understand the quality of our own times, that we should read rightly their *signs*, appraise justly their tendency, yield ourselves frankly to God's purposes in them. The most superficial student of history will recognize the extraordinary importance of some periods. There are well-marked junctures which sum up one epoch and inaugurate another, when forces which have long prevailed are found to have lost vitality, and new forces, hitherto unsuspected, come on the scene. There are times of crises, when nations unconsciously determine their subsequent fortunes, when attitudes are adopted, often, as it seems, unconsciously, which in the sequel make or mar empires. The Hebrew prophets were accustomed to speak of such critical junctures by an expression of great and solemn suggestiveness; they were "*days of the Lord*," moments in the world's life when God stepped forth from His seclusion on to the arena of human affairs and worked wondrously. At such times men were subject to a great testing, and brought within audience of a sublime appeal.

2. The advent of the Lord Jesus Christ was pre-eminently such a "*day of the Lord*." Even the secular historian finds himself compelled to recognize the singular combination of forces and tendencies which marked the birth of the Christian religion. "*When the fulness of*

time came, God sent forth His Son." There is a noble and satisfying philosophy of history in St. Paul's phrase, and it is not less congruous with the facts certified by historical science than with the assumptions of Christian belief. All previous human experience is gathered up in the single and sublime notion of a *praeparatio evangelica* ("a preparing for the Gospel"), and all succeeding human experience is religiously summarized as a *praedicatio evangelica* ("a preaching of the Gospel"). The earthly career, of which the slender yet sufficient tradition survives in the New Testament, is the centre of time, the watershed of human history, the meeting-point of the many separate streams of tendency which raised mankind to the point at which it could receive the Gospel, the spring of the manifold energies which have been slowly but surely carrying that Gospel into the mingled and progressive life of the race. The unique exaltation of the New Testament, which, apart from all theories of inspiration and canonicity, does separate it by a broad and manifest superiority from the literature of the sub-apostolic age, may perhaps be partly explained by the intense conviction of the central character and universal significance of Christ's advent, which glows on the sacred pages. The writers had been lifted above all narrow and conventional standpoints, and carried to an altitude from which all the mystery and marvel of

history were seen in their true perspective, and correlated with a supreme and all-embracing fact. Interpreting all the past, in contact with all the present, claiming and conquering all the future, they saw Him whom the strange folly of the world had murdered, and whom the Church surely knew to be living, near, and active—"*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.*"

3. Before and after that climax of divine self-revelation, the same principle is seen to control the course of history. Mankind is prepared for the Incarnation by the method of crises. Prophecy is really the principle implied in crisis. God speaks through the chosen and commissioned spirit of the prophet, and the message precipitates a religious crisis: and every religious crisis takes the same form. It is the emergence of new truth, involving a rectification of accepted standpoints, an abandonment of the provisional, and a recognition of the permanent, an attainment of a higher stage in the slow but continuing advance from the lowest to the highest state of man.

This process of spiritual advance by means of the recurrent crises induced by prophecy is familiarly known to us in the history of Israel, and had in that history a special character, but it is coextensive with the whole sphere of human existence. The divine Spirit is in contact with the spirit of man by virtue of the

natural necessity implied in man's ultimate origin. "*From generation to generation*"—writes one of the wisdom of God—"*passing into holy souls she maketh men friends of God and prophets.*"

> "We were taught"—wrote Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century—"that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have already signified that He is the reason, in which every race of men did share. Thus those who lived with reason are Christians even if they were counted godless, as of the Greeks, Socrates, Heraclitus and others like them, and of the barbarians Abraham, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, Elijah and many others, whose names and acts we decline to set down here, knowing that they would be long to tell."[1]

At every time of crisis the words of our Lord with respect to His own contemporaries might have been spoken, to many, generally to most, "*Ye cannot discern the signs of the times,*" and as surely the words of St. Paul do but summarize and echo the message which every prophet, Jewish and ethnic, carried to his fellows, "*Now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep.*" If history can offer any trustworthy indications as to the divine method in the spiritual education of mankind, then we

[1] *Apol.* i. 46.

must expect that still, as always before, advance will be by means of recurrent crises induced by prophecy. The apology of Amos for his unpalatable and unaccustomed preaching remains the norm of all similar apologies: "*Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?*"

4. The history of the Christian Church, then, is a history of crises induced by prophecy, of reformations and counter-reformations, of systems and the rejection of systems, of Churches and the dissolution of Churches, of martyrdoms and the building of martyrs' tombs, of creeds and the changing of creeds. It is unfortunate that the study of Christian history is so generally neglected. The zealots of particular Churches, indeed, write more or less credible accounts of those Churches, and these appear to be widely read, but they do not help us. Perhaps an ecclesiastical history proper is, in the nature of the case, compelled to sacrifice perspective to effect, truth to policy; certainly I should advise any one, seeking to gain a just view of Christian history, to avoid at the start the ecclesiastical histories so called, and to read first the general histories. He will get a better-balanced notion of the facts, and be in some measure protected from the delusive

enthusiasm of authors whose real interest in the past is not historical, but denominational, and probably also polemical.

The more closely you study the record of the Christian religion, the more impressed you will be by two facts. On the one hand, you will note the instability which marks organization, moral standard, theological system, liturgical habit; on the other hand, you will admire the indestructible vitality of those elements of life and faith which may properly be called dominical. Every crisis in the Church, when examined, is seen to be the disentangling of this abiding dominical truth from some perishing connection of custom or thought.

These times of transition are times necessarily of mental confusion, and of moral distress; and truly, when these conditions prevail, there are observable by all who have eyes to discern, and courage to interpret them, the "*signs*" of approaching change. Then the old issue is presented, and men must make their choice. Will they hold all the harder to what they have received, because it is plainly slipping from their grasp? or will they rather look resolutely in the face the novel demands on faith and life which their age offers, and go forward, though at the sacrifice of much that is familiar, and has been serviceable? Progress, remember, always must involve a twofold action. On the one hand it abandons, on the

other it receives: it discards the obsolete, it accepts the revealed; it resigns the "*beggarly elements*," it seizes the wider and deeper things of "*perfection*"; it "*forgets*" and it "*stretches forward*." The manly confession of St. Paul is truly the formula of a living and progressing Church: "*One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal.*"

5. Now, as I read the history of Christianity, there are three notable conditions of religious crisis which might fairly claim to be regarded as those "*signs of the times*" which our Lord blamed his contemporaries for failing to "*discern*." First of all, the general conscience revolts against the Christian Church, so that this portentous contradiction emerges, that good men conceive themselves conscientiously bound to resist the normal and characteristic procedure of that very society which exists to promote goodness on the earth. That is the first sign of religious transition—the revolt of the general conscience. Next, and perhaps in an inevitable association, the educated intelligence repudiates the current, established doctrine. Official formularies—creeds and confessions—lose correspondence with men's actual convictions, and become, apparently and increasingly, unreal. That is the second sign of religious transition—the alienation of the educated intel-

ligence. Finally, men's political and social ideals become divorced from religion. The Church tends to become isolated from the practical thinking of the time, to lie apart from the main concerns of men, to have an aspect of obsoleteness and futility. That is the third sign of religious transition—the secularization of men's ideals.

Take as the test of my present argument two of the greatest—perhaps, indeed, the greatest—crises of Christian history, which were, perhaps, better described as two phases of one crucial process—the Reformation in the middle of the sixteenth century and the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth. Making the fullest allowance for the devotion and personal sanctity which existed in the sixteenth-century Church, and remembering that the Reformation was a mingled movement, which included many tendencies and served many interests, which had little enough connection with righteousness—and, perhaps, this must be the case with every great human movement—yet will any student of the time seriously question that the medieval Church was challenged, both by the general conscience and by the educated intelligence of Christendom, and that the political and social ideals of the age tended, beyond all precedent, to take a non-religious aspect? We know that the best churchmen of the age perceived the

alienation which they were powerless to arrest. It is not necessary to draw on the invectives of sectaries, or the apologies of reformers in order to sustain against the responsible leaders of the Church in the sixteenth century the charge which our Lord preferred against the religious chiefs of Israel, "*Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times.*"

In France, on the eve of the Revolution, the auguries of coming disaster were writ large on the face of society. It was in the year 1753 that Chesterfield uttered his famous opinion: "All the symptoms which I have ever met with in history previous to great changes and revolutions in government now exist and daily increase in France," and within forty years the king had been publicly guillotined, the constitution of government had been overturned, and Christianity had been abjured with an extraordinary demonstration of atheistic malignity. The excesses of the revolutionaries must not blind us to the fact that the French Church had waked against itself the conscience of the good and the intelligence of the learned, while it seemed to be practically useless to the enthusiasts of democracy, with whom lay the future. We must not dwell at greater length on these historical reminiscences; enough has been said to illustrate the proposition that religious revolution has been commonly heralded

by the moral and intellectual alienation of serious men, who would naturally be the mainstay and distinction of the Church.

6. Ask yourselves whether the familiar tokens are not again becoming visible. Are we not ourselves approaching another religious crisis? Are not the signs of transition being once more offered us on every hand? A well-known American psychologist, Dr. Stanley Hall, has recently written in despondent terms of religion in America.

> "Statistics," he says, "show more sects and more clergymen *per capita* of population than in any other land, and a rapidly progressive ignorance by the rising generation of the very Bible we profess to revere. Churches, charities, missions abound, but our slums are putrefying sores whose denizens anthropologists believe lower in the moral and intellectual scale than any known race of savages, and the percentages of juvenile crimes and the average age of first commitment grow steadily earlier. We have vastly simplified politics by separating Church and State, and by our voluntary system, but we have also permitted a chasm to yawn between science and theology, till even seminaries for the training of clergymen neglect and even suspect the study of nature, as if God were a hypocrite and did one thing in His works and said another

in His Word, when in fact each supplements and is an imperfect thing without the other." [1]

The notes of moral protest and intellectual resentment are plainly audible in such utterances. At every important assembly of Christian men for conference, such as the English Church Congress, which may fairly be said to begin its sessions at Weymouth to-day, or the Irish Church Congress, which held its annual meetings last week, you may observe certain subjects appearing on the programme with sinister and suggestive regularity. The reluctance of the abler and better-educated young men to enter the ranks of the Christian ministry, the growing neglect of religious observances, the materialization of popular politics, the distrust and dislike of the clergy which obtain among large sections of the people, the difficulties felt, and ever more vehemently expressed, with respect to the current formularies of faith and worship, the necessity of theological revision and restatement—these are the topics chosen for discussion and debate wherever Christian men draw together in conference. I submit with confidence of your agreement that these topics all indicate precisely those conditions which I have ventured to describe as the heralds of approaching change. They are "*the signs of the times*," which we, who profess to be disciples of Christ, and who claim

[1] Vide *Adolescence*, p. xvii.

to possess in His Gospel the divine secret by which all the various ills of humanity can be healed, are solemnly bound to "*discern*"—that is, to recognize and lay to heart. Why is it that among our contemporaries the moral prestige of official Christianity has fallen so low? Why is it that theology, which was once truly described as the very *scientia scientiarum*, and which (unless it be a misnomer and a pretence) can be no less, now fails—increasingly fails—to interest and to inspire the thoughtful and educated classes? Why is it that the ideals of our Christendom are more and more frankly earth-born and earth-bound, more and more contemptuous of the high, stern truth which includes the very charter of manhood and utters the prophecy of human destinies, that "*man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*"? Ought we not—clergy and laity who claim for ourselves to be Christ's disciples, members, moreover, of famous national Churches, rich beyond others in memories of service, and in possibilities of effort—to take as freshly spoken to ourselves His ancient protest against shallowness and unreality: "*Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times*"?

7. If I have carried you with me up to this point, if we may agree in our interpretation of the past and in our diagnosis of the present,

then we may go one step further and ask—anxiously, penitently, with deep sense of personal responsibility—what lines of guidance emerge for our help, how we may reasonably venture to believe God is calling us to act. St. Paul's words in the Epistle to the Romans at least provide us with the standpoint from which the situation which confronts us ought to be regarded, and indicate the spirit in which the problems of transition ought to be considered.

"*And this*," writes the apostle, breaking off the even tenor of his moral precepts, and giving rein to his ardent and devout conviction of urgency, "*knowing the season, that now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*" First and foremost, we are called to recognize the transitional character of our time, to "*know the season.*" This step taken, everything is possible; this step refused, an absolute paralysis of action is compelled; and, as always, it is the first step that is hardest to take. Allow

that the time is transitional, and you have secured the presupposition of a calm and open-minded consideration of its novel demands: you have released yourself from the chains of ecclesiastical precedent, and laid the foundation for salutary innovation. Next, and assuredly not less important, we are called to recognize the solemn truth, so stern and so dismaying, that the indispensable condition of spiritual insight is moral rightness. The reformer of the Church must begin by a secret process of self-reformation; must bind upon his personal life every law of action which he ventures to propose to others; must sift his own motives, and discern his own desires, before he draws his sword in the Lord's battle. It is here that the great, often to human view the inexplicable, failures have their explanations. Still, in front of the preaching of the kingdom we want—separately, every one in the unpenetrated solitude of personal life—the "*baptism of repentance.*" Nothing can possibly make amends for the absence of that. The reformer's prayer must always be this: "*O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults. Keep Thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me: so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.*" Then, when the

sanctuary of the spirit has been cleansed, and the pure flame of devotion burns on the altar of the heart—then, passing from the secret chamber, where *the Father, which seeth in secret*, has owned and blessed His child, the Christian enters the arena of action, and there he is called to act with absolute sincerity. "*Let us walk honestly, as in the day.*" No refusal to admit new light on old problems, no reluctance to resign claims which are shown to have lost validity, to abandon dogmas which are seen to have become void of truth, no leaning on unreal arguments, and an utter end of all make-belief and pretence—these are the manifest consequences of spiritual *honesty* in a time of transition. Finally, through all the difficult questioning, through all the inevitable changes, one principle will govern the Christian's course, and emerge into ever greater prominence. "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*" says St. Paul. In one striking and luminous sentence he has uttered the principle of all reformations, and laid down the grand test of all religious change. "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.*" Will your revision and restatement of theology have the effect of bringing Him more helpfully into the minds of men as their true Lord? Will your reorganization of current systems of discipline and worship make it easier for men to carry into their common life that model of righteous-

ness and love which the Gospel enshrines? Will your handling of the political questions which determine the mutual relations of Christian Churches, and their efficiency for the task of moral witness in the nations, to which they are called, enable society to recognize more readily, and to accept more frankly, Christ's teaching about fraternity, and service, and sacrifice? The continual exaltation of Christ as the Teacher, Saviour, and King of human life, in all its activities and relationships, is the principle and the test of Christian action in a transitional time: for still, as at the first, "*no man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit.*"

XIII

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY

(PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY)

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."—Revelation i. 10.

1. THIS is probably the earliest use in Christian literature of the name which has become since so widely used—the "*Lord's Day.*" The sacred writer is certainly not the author of the name. He uses a term which his readers know well. We must infer from his use that the first day of the week was familiarly known as the "*Lord's Day*" at the time when the Apocalypse, as we have it, was composed—that is, to speak generally, within the first century of our era. That the first day of the week had acquired religious importance at a still earlier period appears to be certain. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul refers to "*the first day of the week*" as the natural time for making a gift of charity. With respect to "*the collection for the saints,*" he writes to his converts in a passage which has a unique interest as containing the first allusion in Christian literature to the

Christian holy-day. "*Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.*" Clearly St. Paul takes for granted that among his converts at Corinth the religious importance of the "*first day of the week*" was well established. But the Epistle to the Corinthians was beyond all question written before A.D. 57 —that is, within twenty-seven years of the Crucifixion. When we ask what explanation of this religious importance then recognized as attaching to the first day of the week can be given, there is one answer, and only one that can be reasonably offered. Turn to the Synoptic narrative, which is now generally held to be the earliest form of the tradition of Christ's life on earth, the Gospel according to St. Mark, and you will read that "*very early on the first day of the week*" the resurrection of Jesus Christ was announced by an angel to the devout women who had thus early visited their Master's tomb. Such was the belief of the Church at the time when St. Mark's Gospel was compiled, and such in substance was the belief of those from whom St. Paul, after his conversion, learned all he knew about the earthly course of Jesus Christ. You will remember the famous recapitulation of his fundamental teachings with which he prefaces his argument for resurrection. "*I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ*

died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." The Crucifixion, we know, was on Friday: and the third day from the Crucifixion would be the *first day of the week.* St. Paul's conversion carries us back to within (at longest) three or four years of the death of Christ. The chain of evidence is complete. The religious importance of *the first day of the week* arose from the conviction that Christ had risen from the dead on that day, and that conviction is certainly found to exist so early in the Church that we can hardly resist the conclusion that its origin must be sought in the fact that, in some mode which we shall never exactly understand, it was on "*the first day of the week*" that Christ so manifested Himself to His apostles as to create in them the assurance that He was indeed living among them in the fulness of personal life. The phrase of the Apocalypse, then, is not hard of explanation. The *first day of the week* was known as the "*Lord's Day*," because in truth *the Lord* had then made clear His title to the lordship He claimed. It was on that day, so the Church believed, that the *Son of Man*, "*who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh*," was "*declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.*" It was as an "Easter Day in every week" that

the *first day of the week* first secured its religious importance.

2. The connection of the "*Lord's Day*" with the Jewish Sabbath does not appear to me so close at the first as it became afterwards; for it seems to be the case that the earliest converts of the apostles, who were almost always either Jews or Jewish proselytes, continued to observe the Sabbath, and added their observance of the "*Lord's Day*." As the breach with Judaism continually grew wider, and as the number of non-Jewish converts rapidly increased, the observance of the Sabbath disappeared, and the "*Lord's Day*" stood alone in the veneration of Christians. By a natural and familiar process the claims and attributes of the weekly festival of the Law were transferred more or less completely to the weekly festival of the Gospel. The adoption of the Old Testament as the first part of the Christian Bible, and the growth within the Church of a tendency to regard the Christian system as at every point constituting a glorious version of the Jewish, facilitated the process. It is, indeed, true that the mechanical and repulsive Sabbatarianism of the later Puritans was unknown to Christian experience before the Reformation had given birth to Puritanism. Sunday was always regarded as an ecclesiastical institution, and as such its observance came properly within the control of the ecclesiastical authority. The

Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, did not in the eyes of the medieval Churchman have the authority of a divinely-enacted code enforcing itself by inherent and immediate right on every individual Christian. The Bible was always the book of the Church for the mass of believers, to be read when and how the Church appointed; and the Church was constituted as a human polity on familiar political lines, taking account always of the actual circumstances of men, and judiciously fitting the demands of the sacred system to the probabilities of human acceptance. One effect of the Reformation was to give to the Bible a position in Christian regard which it had never hitherto possessed, and which it could not possibly retain. During the strain and stress of the religious crisis men were able to exalt the Bible as a rival to the Church, from which they had broken away, but when the frenzy of the great conflict subsided, and Christendom settled down to an apparently perpetual schism resting as much on ethnical distinctions as on religious disagreement, the Bible was quickly found to be impossible as a rule of practice. It became apparently absurd to attempt to enforce primitive Mosaic rules as to Sabbath observance on modern English folk; and Christians were compelled to reconsider on its merits the whole case for keeping holy the "*Lord's Day*." Ecclesiastical authority, as represented by the

medieval hierarchy, had broken down, and been repudiated. The Bible had been taken as a substitute for ecclesiastical authority, and had been found plainly unsuitable. It remained to go behind both Church and Bible, and to build the case for "*Lord's Day*" observance on its own intrinsic reasonableness. On this occasion, when we are particularly desired by a considerable number of devout lay members of the national Church to press on the congregations whom we are permitted to address the religious duty of "*Lord's Day*" observance, I shall take leave to argue the case not on ecclesiastical or on scriptural grounds, but on grounds of reason and utility. I shall hope to be able to show that, apart from external command, whether of Church or of Bible, we are bound, as reasonable men and good Christians, jealously to guard and reverently to use this heritage of a holy day in every week, which we have received from our religious ancestors.

3. Let me observe that there is great necessity at the present time, if "*Lord's Day*" observance is to hold its place among us, thus to draw to its support the deliberate reason of religious folk. Whatever estimate of ecclesiastical authority you may privately hold, you cannot deny that, in the circumstances of English life to-day, all forms of ecclesiastical authority are, as far as human intelligence can foresee, irrecoverably discredited. You will not be able

to get the "*Lord's Day*" observed by securing from all the Churches of Christendom the most authoritative decisions they can severally pronounce. Modern Englishmen no longer "*hear the Church.*" Again, whatever estimate of Biblical authority you may privately accept, you will grossly delude yourself if you think that arguments based on the precepts of Moses or the practice of the apostles will be able to sustain in the England of our own time the sacred claims of "*the first day of the week.*" Your only chance is to demonstrate, if you can, the intrinsic reasonableness, the spiritual advantage, the social utility of this ancient Christian practice. Your ecclesiastical and scriptural arguments may act as buttresses to the fabric of pious observance you aspire to build, but you must lay its foundation in reason, in religion, and in utility. It is because I believe that this foundation exists that, in spite of many threatening symptoms, I do not despair of the future of the "*Lord's Day.*" At present we are in danger of (to use a colloquial phrase) "falling between two stools." The external authority which imposed on the nation its observance of Sunday has lost power, and we have not as yet provided any substitute. Yet men must in the long run have satisfactory reasons for their action, or they will change it. The prestige of the immemorial past adds to the custom of the present a consecration which long avails to

silence questioning and to compel obedience; but that prestige will fail at last, and when once the long-silenced questioning begins, it is ruthless and destructive. The last things men consent to examine are those which they are about to reject, and no form of bigotry is so vehement and so irrational as that which expresses no living conviction. We may not count, therefore, on the survival of "*Lord's Day*" observance because the venerable system of the national life in Church and in State at every point assumes it. If once the general habits of the people exclude regard for the "*Lord's Day*" as a religious festival, we shall see strange things in the church. There was a time, not long distant from our own, when it was the custom of English Churchmen to frequent the daily prayers in the parish churches, and the clergy were urged to obey the rubric which requires them to read Matins and Evensong daily, because there was a popular demand for such services. The vestry books of St. Margaret's, Westminster, for example, record that in 1698 daily Evensong was introduced into the parish church at the request and at the cost of the parishioners. Now the habits of the people have changed, and daily service is almost everywhere unattended save by officials. It is not difficult to imagine something similar happening with the custom of Sunday worship. At present there are few, if any, rivals to the churches.

Let the theatres and music-halls be open, and society adapt itself to a pleasure-seeking day, do you think the churches, even great churches so full of attraction, historic and artistic, as well as religious, as this, would still be filled? I confess that I have my doubts. Yet this change of social habit will take place—in some sections of the people it has already taken place—unless we can convince the reason of the nation, and awaken the conscience of the Church, with such effect that patriots and Christians (the descriptions surely combine naturally in the same persons) agree to maintain the sacred character of the "*Lord's Day*" as in the highest degree ministerial to the national well-being. Let us very briefly sketch the outlines of the argument we desire to offer.

4. First of all, we place the effect of "*Lord's Day*" observance on the individual, on his bodily health, on his mental vigour, on his moral character. The words of the sacred writer seem to be particularly relevant to the "*Lord's Day.*" "*Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.*" Probably the well-known testimony of Sir Matthew Hale would be endorsed by all who have made the same experiment.

> "Though my hands and mind have been as full of secular business, both before and since I was a judge, as, it may

be, any man's in England, yet I never wanted time, in my six days, to ripen and fit myself for the businesses and employments I had to do, though I borrowed not one minute from the "*Lord's Day*" to prepare for it, by study or otherwise. But, on the other hand, if I had at any time borrowed from this day any time for my secular employments, I found that it did further me less than if I had let it alone; and, therefore, when some years' experience, upon a most attentive and vigilant observation, had given me this instruction, I grew peremptorily resolved never in this kind to make a breach upon the "*Lord's Day*," which I have strictly observed for above thirty years. This relation is most certainly and experimentally true, and hath been declared by me to hundreds of persons, and now I declare it to you."[1]

Life in the seventeenth century when the admirable Lord Chief Justice learned the value of the rest of Sunday was calm and reposeful in comparison with the life which we lead to-day. It is difficult to over-estimate the physical and mental worth of a quiet Sunday, when the spell of Christ is on the wheels of the world, and, as if in a better world than this, the task-masters vanish and the workers are at rest.

What folly to break that blessed spell! What

[1] Vide *Memoirs of Sir M. Hale*, by I. B. Williams, p. 233.

wantonness of selfish pleasure-seeking to insist that the whole machinery of labour shall be set in motion for those multitudes of toilers who, in a thousand capacities, minister to the amusements of the people! You need not be a Christian to accept my present argument. Facts accumulate to show that life, as we know it, is too strenuous, exciting, and rapid for many among us. Nervous disorders of all kinds are on the increase. The multitudes of the insane are growing every year. Suicides are always more numerous. The effect of this fever in which we live is to be traced in the pleasures we seek, and the vices we indulge. Is it not clear enough that, merely from the point of view of physical health and mental vigour, the "*Lord's Day*" is worth preserving? Body and mind are much, but character is more. Here I admit that a man must be a Christian to feel the whole force of the argument; but much will be acknowledged by every man who believes that there is a higher life of the conscience and of the affections, which cannot be neglected without ruinous injury to the man himself. Through the days of the week, crowded with business, there is too often little leisure for reading, for thinking, above all, in the whole fulness of its meaning, for worship. Who can over-state the potential worth of the quiet Sunday, when there is time to read, to think, to pray? Society in its best sense demands not the excitement of

conventional entertainment, but the easy and affectionate intercourse of family and friendship. If, moreover, the Christian doctrine about man be true—and man is indeed essentially spiritual, the child of God, fashioned by Him and for Him—then, indeed, the "*Lord's Day*" intervenes in the materializing course of his life in the world to rescue him from the dwarfing and hardening tendencies under which perforce he lives, to restore the balance of his nature, and to vindicate the prerogatives of his manhood.

5. Consider, in the next place, that you cannot touch the interests of the individual without touching, more or less directly, the interests of the nation. The State is concerned in the observance of the "*Lord's Day*" hardly less than the Church : for, when you reflect on the characteristic dangers of modern society, you will find that they are precisely those which such observance tends to mitigate or even to avert. I will but instance two. Will any well-informed or reflective observer of our national life deny that the increasing severity of industrial competition is bringing a bitter spirit of exasperation between the different classes of the nation ? We seem to move in a vicious circle. Always the pressure becomes more severe ; the terms on which industrial success must be won or retained are always rising ; there is to be less and less margin for the humaner activities of life ; more and more the individual is to be

sharpened and hardened and pointed into an economic force. That on the one hand. On the other, always men's resentment against this mutilation and bondage of their manhood is deepening, their desire for a better and a freer lot is always keener; they submit to the discipline of economic life in the sullen temper of mutineers ever on the watch for an opportunity to desert. Now of all the existing arrangements of society, there is none which so clearly and so effectually operates in mitigation of social bitterness and in relief of economic pressure as this traditional observance of the "*Lord's Day*." It is not only that the individual gains in health, vigour, and happiness, that he is in all respects a better citizen for his weekly rest, but it is that the whole atmosphere of the national life is charged with Christian principles through the efforts in witness and in worship, which the national veneration for the Christian festival makes possible to the Church of Christ. I believe that it is hardly possible to exaggerate the social value of the weekly insistence, year in and year out, throughout the length and breadth of the country, on the solemn and elevating and reconciling verities of the Gospel. Even the candid non-Christian will not dissent from this view, when he remembers how many, powerful, and active are the influences which tend to degrade and brutalize the national life.

6. On patriotic grounds, if I may take no

higher, I would appeal to those among us who do not profess to be themselves believers, to deal gently with the "*Lord's Day*," to put some curb on their appetite for pleasure, to give some thought to the natural consequences of their example. Would God my voice could reach the crowds of rich English folk who, with all their time at command, and no resource of pleasure beyond their reach, will yet lay their hands on the sacred day, and make it, in their selfishness, a day of toil to many, a day of disturbance and grief to many more!

The worst things men do, they do from sheer thoughtlessness. We have been hearing much lately of the public risks occasioned by the reckless driving of motorists on the high-roads, to the cost of which they contribute nothing, and which they render almost useless to others who, by every moral consideration, have a better right than they to use them. Serious as this evil is, I am not sure that it is really so serious as the effect which Sunday motorists are having on the villagers of England. Thanks to the reverence still felt for the "*Lord's Day*," the roads are free from ordinary traffic. The motorist has a monopoly of the highways, and he uses it with reckless egotism. A quiet Sunday is no longer possible in many villages. Even the hours of divine service are not respected, but the worship of the villagers is disturbed by the noise of passing cars. The

lovely country ways are defiled with stench, hideous with the aspect of the motorists, choked with dust. Desecration and discomfort are everywhere. It is hard to speak with patience of the wanton selfishness of these people, rich and idle for the most part, who are stealing from our country folk their heritage of Sunday calm. I beg respectfully to suggest to those who are engaged in framing rules for motorists, to take some thought for the special claims of the "*Lord's Day*" as a national institution of great importance to the well-being of society. Let respect be shown to the national traditions, if not to the national faith. Let the comfort of the citizens be regarded, if the honour of Christ be left out of reckoning.

7. But, when all is said, it is the national faith and the honour of Christ which will most appeal to a congregation of English Christians, and my concluding words must be concerned with them. Can it indeed be the case with any one who owns the lordship of the Crucified that the "*Lord's Day*" makes no appeal and kindles no emotion? Do all the ardent words in which through so many ages the holy joys of its religious fellowship have been exalted by the saints of Christ wake no response in our hearts, and carry for us no meaning? If, indeed, for any of us these challenges seem to fall on our ears as censures, let me entreat you to consider in calmness of serious thought what must be the con-

sequences of yielding to the tendencies, strong always, and now in some directions prevailing, which are stripping the "*Lord's Day*" of its ancient honour, and bringing the whole of human life under the dominion of the lower interests of mankind. We have heard much lately of attacks on Christianity. The Creeds are in danger, say some; the Bible is imperilled, say others; and some are crying for vigorous defensive action. There is, believe me, infinitely more risk to religion in the growing laxity among Christians with respect to the "*Lord's Day*" than in all the avowed attacks on our religion.

Whatever controversies may be moved with respect to the Creeds, there can be no possible peril to faith so long as Christians are living in the spirit and power of habitual worship. The freest movement of honest criticism need not alarm those to whom the Bible is familiar and precious as the casket and vehicle of the words of the living God. Even the vulgarizing, God-banishing distractions of modern life lose their sinister influence on those who, week by week, can truly say that they have been "*in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.*"

"Come and spend but a day in loving God," cried Richard Baxter to the keen and ardent disputants of his time, "as thou dost in talking of Him, and try whether love, and the holiest love, be a wearisome work."[1]

[1] Vide *Works*, xiii. 448.

Do you wish to defend the faith, you who are neither clever, nor learned, nor important? You can do so by keeping holy the "*Lord's Day*," and resisting within the circle of your influence all that makes for its neglect or desecration. Do you wish to have a part in preaching Christ and extending His kingdom among men, you whose work in the world leaves little leisure for what is called "religious" activity, and who, moreover, have neither the gifts nor the knowledge for the preacher's task? You can do it most effectually by strengthening the witness of the Church as, week by week, from altar and pulpit in the myriad temples of Christendom, she proclaims the everlasting Gospel, and "*shows forth the Lord's death till He come.*" Would you serve the nation, you whose humble fortunes seem as trivial an element of the national life as the fleeting bubble on that historic stream which for a thousand years has hearkened to the chanting of Westminster? You can do that also in no slight measure by adding the strength of a personal example and a personal influence to the sacred and sanctifying tradition of "*Lord's Day*" observance.

XIV

DIDACTIC RESERVE

(PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN)

"And He said unto them, Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear. And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you: and more shall be given unto you. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath."—St. Mark iv. 21–25.

1. THESE are among the best-known words of Christ; they are found with characteristic variations of form and context in all the Synoptics; possibly we may infer from this circumstance, and from the proverbial aspect of the words themselves, that our Master was serving Himself of sayings current in the popular usage of the time, in order to carry the more effectually into the minds of His hearers the lessons He would have them learn, accommodating Himself thus to their simple and undeveloped understandings. If we must compare the Synoptic accounts, and make choice of one as superior in

historical trustworthiness to the rest, then I shall take leave to avoid a critical discussion by professing my agreement with Dr. Swete's opinion that "the inner coherence of the sayings with the preceding context supports Mark," and I shall assume accordingly that we have before us not a dubious mosaic of detached sayings, but a single and coherent teaching of our Lord. If I may be allowed the phrase, I would say that, alike in its simplicity of homely metaphor and in its profundity of religious truth, it is an eminently characteristic teaching. Christ draws the picture of "the commonest furniture of a Galilean home" in order to set forward the enduring truths which must be taken into account when the difficult task of the Teacher is by any one attempted. We may infer from the context that the disciples were somewhat exercised in mind on the subject of Christ's manner of teaching. The parable as the didactic instrument of a great prophet (and such on the lowest estimate they held Christ to be) appeared to them unsatisfactory and disappointing. It neither impressed nor convinced, being at the same time almost childish in its simplicity, and extremely obscure in its intention. They themselves were conscious of missing the point of the charming stories they delighted to listen to, and they certainly listened with a greater desire to know than that which inspired the audience of the Galilean crowds. It was not thus that

the famous prophets of the past had declared the messages of the Eternal. Sometimes by significant actions which arrested the attention even of the most frivolous, sometimes by sombre eloquence which compelled the audience even of the most reluctant, sometimes by glowing rhapsodies which stirred the enthusiasm of the least heroic, the prophets of the past had borne their witness. We know from the fragments of Jewish literature which have survived from that age that the favourite form of religious composition was that which is called Apocalyptic, of which a notable specimen is included in the New Testament itself. A generation which delighted in Apocalypses might well have been disposed to resent parables as the instruments of divine messages. We need not, therefore, wonder that "*when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parables.*" The answer of Christ was expressed in phrases of the Old Testament which appear several times, in various connections, in the New, and may have acquired a quasi-proverbial character. "*And He said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them.*" The passage, as it stands,

has a harsh sound, and its apparent meaning is hard to reconcile with the spirit of the Gospel. We may fairly conjecture, as well from the Synoptic variations as from the form of the passage in the text—a free adaptation of the Septuagint version of Isaiah—that the tradition of Christ's speech, which the evangelist records, is confused. Be this as it may, we are only now concerned with it as a frank acknowledgment by our Saviour, that He did employ a didactic method which included a calculated reserve, and had the effect of deliberate concealment.

> "The parable is evidently regarded by Jesus as a form of teaching intended to veil the truth conveyed, and adapted, therefore, to esoteric teaching. Moreover, the teaching *is* esoteric; it concerns the mysteries of the kingdom of God, not the ordinary facts in regard to it, but certain things intended not for the common ear, but only for the disciples. And the parable does so veil the meaning that it has to be explained even to them. . . . Our Lord's statement, then, is simply this: that the mystery of the kingdom, or its secret, is not intended for those outside of it, and that therefore he uses in conveying it to His disciples the contrivance of the parable, so that outsiders who have not the clue may hear without hearing."[1]

[1] *Vide* Gould, *St. Mark*, p. 73–74. I.C.C.

2. In the text it appears to me that Christ is offering an explanation, which is also a justification, of His didactic method. On two sides that method seemed to lie open to criticism. It implied a selection of hearers, and it implied a concealment of truth. It was a method of privilege, and a method of reserve. In both characters it needed explanation, and, in so far as explanation in some sense is an acknowledgment of the need of defence, it needed apology. "*And He said unto them, Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light.*" Every form of apparent partiality in the distribution of divine gifts is shown to be conditioned by a purpose of universal benefit. Privilege, we are bidden to know, is designed with a view to wider service than could otherwise be rendered. Therefore privilege may never be interpreted as divine favour, but only and always as divine vocation, save that, for such men as we are, in such a world as this, the latter must be held to imply the former. It must follow that every privilege carries with it a summons to its responsible and intelligent use. "*Take heed* (or rather, *consider carefully*) *what ye hear*"—that is the significant warning which our Lord builds on His declaration as to the

purpose which determines such privilege of religious opportunity as the apostles were permitted to enjoy. How rich beyond description that privilege was is now clearly seen! They possessed the intimate comradeship of the great Teacher; they were eye-witnesses of His deeds of power and mercy; they were free to ask from Him explanations of His doctrine; they were admitted into the secrets of His own spiritual life. These, beyond all question, were religious privileges, unique, priceless, supreme. It remains still one of the perennial difficulties of Christian faith that the religion of the Incarnation—that is, remember, the religion which has for its postulate the emergence of the Creator Spirit Himself in history by an act of plenary divine self-revelation in an Individual—should have approached men in so restricted a sphere as Palestine, and to so small a company as the apostles. Privilege enfolds the cradle of the Catholic faith, and the religion of humanity is uttered first in the language of a narrow nationalism. It would have been extremely easy for the apostles to take as their own the immense privileges granted to them, to enjoy them to the full, and to make rich with them their personal life, without ever asking themselves what might be the reason why they had thus been chosen and blessed by God. Christ reminds them that there is a reasonable purpose in this grant of

privilege. By the simplest of illustrations He lights up the darkest of questions. Why, He asks them, does the lamp-stand have its place in the hall? Is it not that the lamp may be set thereon, and give light to all who enter the house? They must picture to themselves their privileges as like the lamp-stand, designed for a purpose of public usefulness. St. Matthew records an exhortation which seems plainly concerned with the same point: "*What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the house-tops.*" It has been suggested very plausibly that our Lord in these words alludes to the familiar procedure of the Jewish schools, where

> "the doctor whispered out of the chair into the ear of the interpreter, and he, with a loud voice, repeated to the whole school that which was spoken in the ear."[1]

The apostles are to regard the private teachings which He is giving them as the interpreter in the schools regards the knowledge which he receives from the teacher, as something, that is, which they have received for the very reason that they should hand it on to others. "*Freely ye received; freely give,*" is the formula of apostolic privilege.

> "Our Lord," it has been said, "corrects a false impression which might have arisen

[1] *Vide* Lightfoot, "Exercitations," *Works*, xi. 179.

from the mention of a '*mystery*' *of the kingdom of God.*"[1]

If in respect of the non-believing world there was truly an esoteric Christian teaching, yet within the circle of believers there could be nothing of the kind. In the Church there could be no reality in the familiar distinction between exoteric truth, or truth which is common to all disciples, and esoteric truth, or truth which is reserved for a privileged section of disciples. Christian history tells of a great retrocession from this primary truth.

> "Gnosticism revived the idea, familiar to heathen thought, but wholly alien to the spirit of Christianity, of one religion designed for the wise and the initiated, and another for the ignorant and profane vulgar. Faith, the foundation of Christian knowledge, was fitted only for the rude mass, the ψυχικοι or animal men who were incapable of higher things. Far above these were the privileged natures, the men of intellect, the πνευματικοι or spiritual men, whose vocation was not to believe but to know. . . . Such a distinction, as Neander has well observed, was natural in the heathen systems of antiquity, because heathenism was destitute of any independent means, adapted alike to all stages of human enlightenment, for satisfying man's

[1] *Vide* Swete, p. 78.

> religious needs. Such a means, however, was supplied in Christianity by a faith in great historical facts, on which the religious convictions of all men alike were to depend. . . . The motto of the Gnostic might be exactly given in the words of a distinguished modern philosopher (Fichte): 'Men are saved, not by the historical, but by the metaphysical.'" [1]

The lust of religious privilege which was openly pandered to by the Gnostic systems has never failed to find means of asserting itself within the Christian society. In the sphere of morality we encounter asceticism, the higher life, so described, of the celibate and the recluse. In the sphere of government we must make our count with sacerdotalism, the doctrine of hierarchical Divine Right, exclusive claims of an apostolical succession securing and conveying, as by lawyer's act and seal, the graces of the Spirit of God. In the sphere of theology the same anti-Christian spirit of privilege creates orthodoxies and coerces opinion. The haughty intolerance of non-official, non-professional developments of thought which says with the Pharisees, "*This people which knoweth not the law is cursed,*" has never ceased to darken the progress of Christian thinking. At bottom in every case there is the natural lust of a privileged status which, in advance of the history of

[1] *Vide* Mansel's *Gnostic Heresies*, p. 10.

Christianity, and in face of His own didactic method, which seemed to involve privilege and reserve, Jesus Christ decisively disallowed. There would be, of course, differences between His disciples in natural intelligence, in spiritual attainment, in ecclesiastical function; but none whatever in religious status, or in the standard, to which they are called, and which they are all, in the sequel, designed to reach. St. Paul, at least, had perceived the drift of the Master's teaching, and entered into its spirit, when he described the Church as charged with a grand educational function, ordered of God "*for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*"

3. Our Saviour, in explaining His own didactic method, has suggested the principle which must govern all honest teaching in His Church: "*There is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light.*" Reserve in teaching there must be, if anything at all is to be taught to the simple and the stupid; but in this necessity for reserve will be contained the possibility of almost infinite abuses of the teacher's authority. He will be tempted to make terms with the spiritual indolence of his

simpler hearers, and in order to save himself trouble to allow them to remain in ignorance and error. Nor is this all the danger. He will find it perilously easy to serve an unworthy ambition at the expense of his flock, for they will surely be credulous in proportion to their ignorance, and they will not readily resist the personal claims which in the service of his own vanity and ambition he may make on them. I am but describing an abuse of authority to which every page of Christian history bears testimony. Superstition and tyranny play into one another's hands, and by a reciprocity of complementary vices the teacher silently grows into the hierarch and the priest. Remember, so the great Teacher warns all who are teachers, that whatever you teach has a distant purpose; now it is hidden in the crudely simple dogmatic which, by the exercise of a didactic reserve, both merciful and calculated, you offer to the young, the immature, and the unintelligent; but it is only hidden for a time. That crudely simple dogmatic is a means to the end of larger measures of knowledge and freedom than now, for such as they, seem to be conceivable. Your teachings also are truly "*mysteries of the kingdom*"—truths, that is, disguised in charity and with a purpose, destined to wider publicity and more distant effects. There is all the difference in the world between reserve determined by the educational interest of the

disciple, and reserve dictated by the selfish interests of the teacher. But the one will easily enough disguise itself as the other, and pass for it. When, moreover, this reserve which secures an excessive and illegitimate authority to the teacher is strongly entrenched in the prejudices of the taught, then to break it will certainly involve unpopularity and even loss. "*With a great sum obtained I this freedom*" might be the confession of honest teachers in every age, and most of all in an age of transition like our own.

4. The task of the Christian teacher is, indeed, now beyond precedent difficult, and by consequence the temptations to its unfaithful exercise are more than commonly strong. We have reached a point at which the divergence between the knowledge of the educated minority and the belief of the multitude threatens to become a contradiction. Among Protestants this divergence has mainly attached to the documents on which all certain knowledge of the Christian revelation must be based. The science of Biblical criticism (to which the scholars of the Church of Scotland are making such valuable contributions) has effected changes of the most far-reaching character in the theological inferences which are deducible from the Bible. What meaning can the modern Biblical student read into the traditional theology, based as it is at every point

on conceptions which have not so much been repudiated as silently expired? Yet that traditional theology still reigns supreme in the acceptance of the multitude of believers, and forms, or seems to form, the indispensable basis of practical morality. The necessity of didactic reserve appears to be as evident as its difficulty. How shall the requirement of charity be reconciled to the demand of intellectual self-respect? How shall the Christian teacher attack the prejudices of the people without hurting their consciences? How shall he lead a double life and use two religious dialects without immersing himself in a network of moral confusions, from which in the long run he must contract the abiding stain and weakness of hypocrisy?

Moreover, difficulties emerge from another side which may well give pause to the most honest and most courageous of teachers, and which are exultantly pleaded by the least honest and the least courageous. Your negations are many, it is objected; your affirmations are few; and men live by faith, not by doubt. You may not in reason or in charity weaken the great tradition of Christian belief until you have in your hands a substitute to take its place, an effective alternative version of the truth which men may adopt in lieu of that which at your instance they surrender. In truth, there is a terrific plausibility about such

considerations, commended as they are by the most venerated authorities of the Churches and by the pathetic distress of the faithful. For no man can accept the principles and postulates of modern science, and as an inquirer, with those weapons of research, cross the threshold of the vast territories of human knowledge, and gain from thence a prospect clearer at every step of the infinitely vaster expanse of human ignorance, without being daunted, and dismayed, and disabled, and disarmed.

> "I falter where I firmly trod,
> And falling with my weight of cares
> Upon the great world's altar stairs
> That slope thro' darkness up to God,
> I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what I feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope."

Yes, the "larger hope," which lifts the Christian teacher above the immense discouragements of his lot, is built on the assurance that "*there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light.*" You can serve the cause of truth only by yourself being true. The interest of truth is finally in other hands than yours. Your honest blunders laid on the altar of the God of Truth are transmuted in its sacrificial fires into acceptable oblations. The only contribution we have

it in our power to make to the ultimate victory of truth is our own fearless loyalty to such perceptions of truth as we have. We teach with such lights as are ours, and we teach in faith, looking for the great synthesis which we cannot yet descry. "*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.*" The abiding value of our efforts to know lies not in the knowledge they may gain, but in the sincere spirit they reveal, for that is the condition of loyalty to the truth itself.

There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.

No didactic reserve can be permissible to the Christian teacher which will wound his own self-respect by infusing an element of conscious insincerity into his public teachings.

5. Respect for one's own conscience is the best of all securities for that respect for the consciences of others which charity and justice plainly demand. The Christian teacher, when he sets himself to the difficult task of conveying unaccustomed truth into uneducated minds, will consider most carefully not only how to express his actual beliefs with fidelity, but also how to

ensure that what he says makes the right impression on his hearers. Probably it is the case that at any given time every historic phase of its religious development is represented in the Christian Church; and that means far more than that there are so many backward and undeveloped Christians on the earth. It means that there are so many Christians who are naturally incompetent to receive Christian truth except in specific modes of presentation. To offer the truth in other and higher modes would be useless; roughly to disallow the modes adapted to their level of intelligence and religious progress would be to do them a spiritual wrong. The intuitive sympathy of the pastor must determine the didactic method which, with respect to individuals and to classes, the Christian teacher will adopt; and a just perception of the variety and complexity of conditions under which a Church, claiming to be national, will have to fulfil its ministry to a whole nation, will authorize, nay, will require, a large acquiescence in ecclesiastical arrangements, which may be in themselves actually distasteful. Something must be conceded to history; very much must be conceded to the practical necessities of a national Church. The didactic reserve of the individual Christian teacher will necessarily embody both concessions.

I have ventured to address you on a subject

which is becoming every day more urgently important. We cannot shut our eyes to the humbling and unpalatable fact that the public confidence in the good faith of Christian teachers has been greatly shaken. Knowledge is diffused among the people as never before, and there is growing up in every part of Christendom a numerous class of educated laymen, who are religiously interested, and who are informing themselves on the subjects of religious controversy. These men discover, or think they discover, an indefensible divergence between what the clergy, as educated men, must know, and what, as officials, they actually teach and preach. Meanwhile, the ancient forces of unteachable, uncompromising theological conservatism are waking again to activity, and serving themselves of the ignorance and timidity of the multitude. In all the Churches of Christendom the same issue is being presented and the same conflict being entered upon, but it is national Churches which appear to me the best placed for effecting that process of theological revision and restatement which the times require. On the clergy of those Churches, and pre-eminently on those who are set in the greater seats of doctrine, a solemn responsibility appears to rest. They are teachers, and the teachers of teachers, and as such they are divinely called by the evident needs of the age to stand, like Aaron in the Hebrew legend,

between the living and the dead, staying the plague that wastes the people of the Lord. Living truth and dead theology, and a plague of unbelief running through the land—that is the situation. The student of Christian history knows that it is not a novel situation, though always full of anxiety and loss. It is a situation which calls for men of learning and for men of courage, most of all for men of faith, who through all perplexities and in face of all difficulties "*endure, as seeing Him who is invisible.*" It is possible for us—strangely and dreadfully possible—to stand aside from the Lord's controversy in sloth, or apathy, or cowardice: we can delude ourselves by a hundred sophistries into acquiescing in the waxing divergence between the knowledge of the universities and the teaching in the parishes; we can pass for liberal theologians here, and be received as orthodox champions there; but let us not forget that there comes a day of reckoning, when our hollow pretensions must be unmasked and our immoral reserve exposed, "*for there is nothing hid that shall not be manifested, neither is anything made secret that shall not come to light.*"

XV

THE DUTY OF INTELLECTUAL EFFORT

(PREACHED TO THE UNDERGRADUATES IN ST. MARY'S, OXFORD)

"Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men."—1 Corinthians xiv. 20.

Two kinds of childishness are indicated by the apostle, the one to be deprecated, the other to be desired. His plea concludes and refers back to a practical discussion. The Corinthians were enamoured of the ecstatic emotionalism which accompanied that charisma which is called the "*gift of tongues.*" To their coarse and semi-pagan minds the violence of gesture and incoherence of speech which marked the possessors of this extraordinary inspiration were peculiarly impressive, and accordingly they set great value on it, and gave it the principal place in their religious assemblies. "*Prophecy,*" and still more, "*teaching*"—gifts which seemed scarcely extraordinary, and certainly did not lend themselves to the excitement and fervour which made the religious assemblies so attractive and so disorderly—were by comparison

little regarded, and in the practice of the Corinthian Church were subordinated to the more popular "*gift of tongues.*" St. Paul sets himself to correct this standard of value. In two important particulars he finds the "*gift of tongues*" defective. It makes no demand on the understanding of the man who possesses it, and it is unintelligible and therefore unedifying to others. As intellectually barren, and as socially valueless, St. Paul puts the popular gift on one side, and exalts the less extraordinary but more serviceable gift of "*prophecy.*" After his manner he states his conclusion in the form of a personal statement: "*I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all: howbeit in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*" Then he adds the direct application of this statement: "*Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.*"

This is not the only passage in the New Testament which compares Christians to children and to men. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for instance, writes with some asperity of the backwardness of those whom he addresses, who, he says, are like unweaned children clinging to the breast when they are old enough and big enough for more independent nourishment. "*For every*

one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." Generally I think the child is offered as the example of what Christians ought to be. No doubt the words of our Lord were much in the mind of the Apostolic Church: "*Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" The humble station and low social rank of the primitive converts gave an obvious propriety to their description of themselves as possessing the characteristic qualities of children —simplicity, weakness, innocence. In the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul exults in the "*obedience*" of his converts, and declares that he would "*have them wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil,*" an aspiration which lies open to the objection that "*good*" and "*evil*" are not always clearly marked, and that it is not very easy to secure that the "*wisdom,*" which shall be available for one class of experiences, shall coexist with the "*simplicity,*" which is proper for another. It will not, perhaps, be wholly unprofitable if we devote our time to-night to considering what, in the circumstances of our own lives, the apostle's counsel requires. How are we to be at once "*babes in malice*" and "*men in mind*"?

We must agree at the start on some modern counterparts of these primitive phenomena—the gift of speaking in an unknown tongue, and the gift of prophecy. It is, surely, not very difficult to reach agreement on the point; for, however much the specific exhibitions of the qualities may vary, the qualities themselves remain always the same. The emotions and the intelligence, sentiment and reason, the heart and the brain, that which is attractive, arresting, brilliant, popular, and that which is unattractive, normal, demanding effort, unpalatable to the multitude—these divergent factors are always present in Christian experience, and they evidently correspond to the contrast which the apostle draws between the "*gift of tongues*" and the "*gift of prophecy*."

> "It is, in fact," comments Godet fairly enough, "the mark of the child to prefer the amusing to the useful, the brilliant to the solid. And this is what the Corinthians were doing by their marked preference for the gift of tongues, and the kind of scorn which they displayed for prophecy and still more for teaching."[1]

Robertson of Brighton characteristically fastened on the contrast in its personal aspect—

> "There are gifts which draw admiration to a man's self, others which solace and soothe him personally, and a third class

[1] Vide *Corinthians* ii. 290.

> which benefit others. The world and the Bible are at issue on the comparative worth of these. A gifted singer soon makes a fortune, and men give their guinea and their ten guineas ungrudgingly for a morning's enjoyment. An humble teacher in a school, or a missionary, can often only but just live. Gifts that are showy, and gifts that please—before these the world yields her homage, while the lowly teachers of the poor and the ignorant are forgotten and unnoticed. Only remember that, in the sight of the Everlasting Eye, the one is creating sounds which perish with the hour that gave them birth, the other is doing a work that is for ever—building and forming for the eternal world an immortal human spirit."[1]

Neither Godet nor Robertson, however, seem to go to the core of St. Paul's meaning. There are in the text two distinctions which we must mark and appreciate. There is a sphere within which experience and knowledge are injurious —the sphere of moral wrong-doing. There is a sphere within which experience and knowledge are indispensable—the sphere of the intellect. "*In malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.*" That is one distinction—a distinction of spheres or of subject matter. By his emphatic association of "*mind*" with manhood

[1] Vide *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 240.

St. Paul indicates the importance which he claims for the intellect in the life of the Christian and of the society of Christians. It is possible, he would say, in your abhorrence of moral corruption to exalt an universal childishness as the proper temper of a disciple. But herein you avoid one error only to fall into another. Innocence ceases to be admirable when it certifies immaturity. Christianity is not a religion for the cradle and the nursery only, or mainly, since Christianity is the religion of God manifest in man, and man is then most competent to fulfil his service when he brings to it the plenitude of powers. St. Paul contrasts the "*man*" and the "*babe*," and he tells us that the Christian is to keep the balance and obey the law of his manhood. "*In mind be men.*"

St. Paul seems to mark off sharply the moral from the intellectual obligation of discipleship. The one resolves itself into a jealous vigilance against every form of evil; the other exacts an honest and arduous service of every kind of truth. Fidelity to a standard once established is the dominant aspect of the one; progress and growth, the recompense and result of discipline and effort, are the leading features of the other. Abstinence and acquisition, to hold fast and to attain, to become as a little child and "*forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are*

before, to press on toward the goal"—it is by such phrases, divergent in suggestion yet correlated in religious experience, that the duty of the Christian is expressed in the New Testament.

If we examine the history of the Christian Church we shall find that there has manifested itself again and again a disposition to magnify one or other aspect of Christian obligation without regard to the symmetry of the blended whole. Heresy, in the apostolic sense of intellectual speculations which justify moral obliquity, is a recurrent phenomenon in ecclesiastical history, and asceticism, with its contempt for learning, and depreciation of mind, is always with us in some form or other.

Immoral intellectualism on the one hand, and irrational morality on the other, have played a great part in Christian history, and never without bringing grievous mischiefs upon mankind. At present the divorce between intellect and enthusiasm, knowledge and zeal, reason and faith—which has often enough emerged before—is again becoming evident, and it is taking a form which makes it specially difficult to detect and expose. Allying asceticism with an ardent advocacy of social reform, men are able to conceal from themselves its essentially anti-social character, and by filling their time with the bustle and distraction of a practical career they exempt themselves

from intellectual exertion without consciously refusing to think or learn. The effect is apparent in the field of society and of politics. Men draw a deep dividing line between the Church of Christ and the free movements of the human intellect, and set faith against reason, authority against truth, as if these were naturally opposed. Nor is this false and dangerous antithesis really affected by the facile assurance of sacred orators that it has no real existence, so long as in evident fact there is a divorce between intellectual effort and religious profession, so long, in plain terms, as the standard of knowledge and mental labour which is accepted by the clergy is lower than that which other educated men accept. "There is probably no profession," observes Sir Samuel Hall in his brief but notable sketch of the "Oxford Movement," "which makes less external demand for constant study and self-improvement after admission than the Church does on a man once admitted to the priesthood."[1] This is certainly the case, but its full gravity is only then perceived when we remember that in no profession is the standard of knowledge exacted from those who are admitted into it more disproportionate to the real requirements of professional efficiency. I speak with some knowledge and experience, echoing the confessions of many clergymen, and

[1] Page 231.

certainly making my own, when I say that ordination marked the beginning of the discovery of our disqualifying ignorance, and the beginning, therefore, of earnest and continuous effort to acquire fitness for the grave and solemn venture of the ministry. How can it be otherwise? By the custom of the Church we are ordained at twenty-three, and receive the priesthood at twenty-four; and then, most commonly, we are swept into the distractions and fatigues of parochial work, and find reading and all mental effort difficult, and perhaps also distasteful. I have seen one thing again and again. Men are able to overcome the intellectually-degrading influence of the clerical career only on two conditions. They must so have spent their time of preparation—that is, their time at school and college—as to have gained possession of their mental powers; and they must accept for themselves a worthy standard of duty with respect to their handling of those powers. Let me develop these points a little. If I seem to be speaking too directly to those of my hearers who may be contemplating the Christian ministry as their career, I will plead in excuse that probably they form no inconsiderable proportion of this assembly, and that the truth which I desire to emphasize has no limited application, but belongs to the duty of every Christian man. "*Be not children in mind*," says the apostle; "*in mind be men*."

He indicates a distinction with which we are all familiar. We know what we mean when we describe a young man as mentally undeveloped, a mere boy in intellect though arrived at the years of a man. There is, of course, the opposite phenomenon of precocity, when the happy and healthy years of boyhood seem to have been omitted in the life, and the coldness and balance of maturity coexist with the form and time of youth. There is much in the circumstances of the modern world which tends to stimulate prematurely the intellectual powers, and to ante-date manhood. The fact that our people are in ever larger numbers born and bred, not as heretofore in the country, but in great cities, tells in this direction.

> "At its best," writes an eminent American psychologist, "metropolitan life is hard on childhood, and especially so on pubescents, and children who cannot pass these years in the country are robbed of a right of childhood that should be inalienable, and are exposed to many deleterious influences which jeopardize both health and morals. Civilization, with all its accumulated mass of cultures and skills, its artifacts, its necessity of longer and severer apprenticeship and specialization, is ever harder on adolescents."[1]

Precocity is near akin to disease, and few

[1] Vide *Adolescence*, i. 321.

features of the social outlook are more truly alarming than that to which I have just adverted. In our alarm, however, we are perhaps in some danger of underrating the opposite tendency, which in some sections of the national life may almost be said to prevail. It is often charged against our English system of education that it fails to develop the intellectual powers, and does not generally succeed in endowing those subjected to it with intellectual interests. Bishop Creighton's well-known mot, "The English people hate knowledge for its own sake," is felt to point a bitter truth. At the public schools and in the universities it can hardly be disputed that a disproportionate importance in the scheme of life is given to non-intellectual achievements. The humiliating and perplexing indifference to the interests of truth, which marks the English professional classes as a whole, and herein pre-eminently the clergy, cannot be separated from the system of education under which the most part of educated Englishmen have been trained. I was much impressed by the views expressed to me this summer by a distinguished Canadian professor as to the disabling effects of an English university education on young Englishmen who have to make their way in the world. The well-born, well-bred young Englishman, it appears, is not well regarded in Canada; he is thought to be deficient in intelligence, in initiative,

in capacity for hard work. I have heard something similar from the lips of prominent commercial men. In my own profession I have often reflected on the suggestion implicit in the popular representations of the clergy. They are saintly imbeciles, or muscular young heroes who overthrow the brutal Samsons of the slums, or man-milliners, or they play at being priests and dabble in socialism. In every representation, whether in the popular romance which is called religious, or in the satires of avowed opponents, this trait seems to be paramount—the intellectual inferiority of the clergy. "*Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*" If there be any element of truth in these descriptions, then it is the case that intellectual inferiority is a real danger threatening the English clergy. There are those who would be at no loss to explain this danger. They would maintain that the fault lies not in the individual, but in the religion he professes and in a sense represents. They think that Christianity is doomed to die of intellectual exhaustion, unable any more to draw to its service the best and most active intellects of the time. That is a solution which I at least have no hesitation in rejecting. For not only do I perceive that the faith of Christ continues, in the present as in the past, to command the reverent acceptance of some at least of the greatest thinkers of the race, but I am persuaded that the religion of Christ is

fundamentally true, and that so far from its profession being inimical to intellectual effort, that profession demands and ought to stimulate the high self-respect which lies at the basis of all genuine intellectual effort. Moreover, I can see explanations of the intellectual disrepute into which the English clergy have fallen, and therefore it carries no suggestion adverse to my faith to recognize the large element of justice there is in the popular complaint. But surely it is a most serious question which the facts to which I have been pointing you propose to every young man placed as you are placed here. The mere circumstance that you are Oxford undergraduates indicates that you have enjoyed the inestimable privilege of postponing the cares and responsibilities of manhood. The vast majority of your contemporaries have to put their hands to the serious work of earning their living while you are still boys at school, and of the middle classes it is but a small proportion which is permitted to add an academical course to the years of school-life. Pre-eminently you are the privileged class, and your privilege is of all privileges the greatest—the opportunity to gain entrance into the ranks of thinking, cultured, informed, even learned, men. And yet what is the picture called up in the mind by the thought of the ordinary Oxford undergraduate? We still quote with an indulgent smile Matthew Arnold's playful

application to Oxford of Byron's well-known line—

"There are her young barbarians *all* at play";

and as the young men struggle through the schools and come to us as junior colleagues what arrests us most about them is their indomitable and unabashed youthfulness of mind. They neither read nor think, nor suspect that they do neither. It was not only of intellectual progress that the apostle was thinking when he wrote the memorable words which utter his own view of life, but assuredly intellectual progress was included in his thought: "*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things.*" "*Be not childish in mind: but in mind be men.*"

You will say to me that your mental powers do not allow you to aspire to much, that you are well assured that your place in the Church will never be such as to require any exceptional knowledge or intelligence, that you have no intellectual ambitions. I shall be reminded that in the circumstances of the world there can be but very few who are really learned, and that the learned will inevitably be specialists, and that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." I came across some observations of the late Duke of Argyll which are worth quoting in this connection—

"The saying that 'A little knowledge is

> a dangerous thing' is far from being a wise proverb, unless the application made of it be very limited indeed. It is true, of course, that very fragmentary knowledge on any subject may lead to erroneous conclusions. But all human knowledge on all subjects whatever is very limited, and it is most untrue that, so far as it goes, if it be well employed, it is an evil rather than a good. My knowledge of chemistry has always been a little knowledge only ; but, so far as it goes, it has been of great use to me in later years, not only in practical affairs, but in enabling me to detect in controversy the extravagant pretensions which have been asserted from its discoveries in some modern systems of philosophy."[1]

It is the case that very few of us all will ever be original students, or able in any branch of human research to dispense with the authority of others. I am not for one moment suggesting the contrary. But we all have had given to us powers of mind, and you, at least, have also the opportunity of improving those powers. When all is said, the intellectual faculties are the noblest gifts of the Creator, and to leave them neglected is to be guilty of the gravest kind of disloyalty. We are called to make the most of what we have received. Five talents, two talents, one talent—the number makes no

[1] Vide *Autobiography*, i. 121.

difference ; the Master's claim is one and the same in every case. And there are reasons special to our Church and time which make it vitally important that the rank and file of Churchmen, whether ordainéd or unordained, should know enough to be sympathetic with men who know more than themselves, and to tolerate points of view which they themselves do neither adopt nor approve. Intellectual activity, the habit of using the mind, of thinking for oneself, of bringing one's own understanding into exercise, is even more important than learning at this juncture. For learning is no security against false theory, and learning in alliance with false theory constitutes the most widely mischievous form of ignorance. The modern Church, following the precedents of history, is forming its polity on the model of contemporary secular polities. Democratic notions are effecting a transference of authority from the hierarchy to the general body of the faithful. This change will, or will not, approve itself as favourable to religious liberty and theological progress according to the degree of the general intelligence and habit of independent thinking. At this moment it is notorious that the more representative our clerical assemblies are, the less intelligent and independent they are. As long as that is the case the Church of England will always be at the mercy of any popular bigot who plays to

the general prejudices. We want a diffusion of knowledge and a prevailing habit of intellectual activity. The reason why the morally-best men are so often in our experience the least intelligent and the most bigoted is the fact that they are intellectually undeveloped. They fail to respect the apostle's distinction, and are "*children in mind*" as well as "*babes in malice.*" The ancient and obstinate error of asceticism is rearing its head again among us, and, wherever asceticism appears, fanaticism is not far distant. I mark already the familiar burden of ascetic preaching, the exaltation of the non-natural, the contempt of the intellectual, the parade of self-suppression, the depreciation of liberty. By authoritative lips and in persuasive terms you are often enough encouraged to absolve yourselves from the arduous yet uplifting labours of the intellect, and to drown thought in the hustle and bustle of social work. Against all such counsels I raise the short and pregnant sentence of St. Paul: "*Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.*" It is related of the famous Cambridge don of the seventeenth century, Joseph Meade, that he pursued with his pupils a somewhat unusual method, choosing

> "rather to set every one his daily task than constantly to confine himself and them to precise hours for lectures. In the evening they all came to his chamber,

to satisfy him that they had performed the task he had set them. The first question which he used then to propound to every one in his order was, 'Quid dubitas?'—'What doubts have you met in your studies to-day?'; for he supposed that to doubt nothing and to understand nothing were verifiable alike."[1]

Sir Thomas Browne wrote as a physician, but his exaltation of reason and learning are not less befitting other Christians, and before all others clergymen, and his quaint yet penetrating words do not wholly lose their relevance when the subject of our inquiry is not nature but revelation:

"The world was made to be inhabited by beasts, but studied and contemplated by man: 'tis the debt of our reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts. Without this the world is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a creature that could conceive or say that there was a world. The wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire His works; those highly magnify Him whose judicious inquiry into His acts, and deliberate research into His creatures, return

[1] *Vide* Masson's *Milton*, i. 126.

the duty of a devout and learned admiration. Therefore—

'Search while thou wilt, and let thy reason go
To ransome truth, even to th' abyss below;
Rally the scattered causes; and that line,
Which Nature twists, be able to untwine.
It is thy Maker's will, for unto none
But unto reason can He e'er be known.

* * * * *

Teach my endeavours so Thy works to read,
That learning them in Thee, I may proceed.
Give Thou my reason that instructive flight
Whose weary wings may on Thy hands still light.
Teach me to soar aloft, yet ever so
When near the sun to stoop again below.
Thus shall my humble feathers safely hover,
And though near earth, more than the heavens discover.
And then at last, when homeward I shall drive,
Rich with the spoils of Nature, to my hive,
There will I sit with that industrious fly,
Buzzing Thy praises which shall never die,
Till Death abrupts them, and succeeding glory
Bid me go on in a more lasting story.'"

"*Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.*" Make your use of the opportunities given you in this place a matter of conscience and religion. Let your memories of Oxford carry a worthier and more consolatory record than that of mere amusement, good-fellowship, and muscular triumph. Learn here to think, to love truth for its own sake, to reverence knowledge, to

despise mental cowardice and indolence. Go out from Oxford competent to do a man's work in the world, to play a man's part in the world's slow and painful movement upwards from ignorance and error onwards to the light.

XVI

THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

(PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER)

"Let his days be few; and let another take his office.
Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.
Let his children be vagabonds, and beg; . . .
Let there be none to extend mercy unto him;
Neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children. . . ."—Psalm cix. 8–10, 12.

"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven."—St. Matthew v. 43, 44.

THE appointed psalms for this evening's service include the verses which I have just read, and many others of a similar character. I am sure that no thoughtful member of this congregation escaped a sense of shame at having sentiments so atrocious ordained for the use of a Christian congregation, and I suspect that many found it impossible to repeat the repulsive words. It was actually painful to hear the clear voices of the children of the choir lent

to the rehearsal of such sustained and relentless malignity. It occurred to me, therefore, that I might with advantage select my text from the 109th Psalm, and set beside it some words of our Saviour Himself, which ought at once and for ever to remove that psalm from Christian use.

Let none suspect me of any intention of defending the use of the psalm as it is ordered by the law of the national Church of England. I should be ashamed to offer to you any of the subtle and artificial explanations, which, from time to time, have been advanced by Christian men in order to justify what the unsophisticated conscience of every Christian man can see at a glance is unjustifiable. Those explanations always arise from one or other of two causes. The use of the psalm is defended either by those who believe that, because it is contained in the Bible, it must be true and edifying, or by those who believe that, because its use is prescribed by the Church, that use must be capable of successful defence. Neither of these suppositions appears to me to be sound. There is much in the Bible which is neither true nor edifying; and the Church has made so many mistakes in the past that nothing can be satisfactorily commended to our present acceptance merely on ecclesiastical authority. I begin by admitting frankly that I think our use of this imprecatory psalm in public worship is totally

indefensible, and I pledge myself to do what I can to get it terminated. No one would dream of tolerating this psalm as one of the Lessons for use on Sundays. Though there is very much in the appointed Lessons which may fairly be objected to as unedifying, yet there is nothing of which it can be truly said that its reading is an offence to the Christian conscience. Moreover, there is a great difference between a Lesson read in the ears of the congregation and psalms which they are expected and required to repeat as the vehicles of their common worship. No personal assent is demanded in the one case, but, in the other, personal assent is the very condition of obedience. No one denies that to use these imprecations with any specific reference (and apart from some specific reference they appear to be totally unmeaning) would be altogether un-Christian. We are assured, indeed, that the author of the psalm did not probably have in his mind any particular person when he composed these frightful anathemas. The critics claim to have brought to us a measure of relief in thus authorizing us to give an impersonal intention to language which, it must be admitted, appears, on the first view of it, to be incorrigibly personal. Perhaps I might advantageously read a few words of that excellent scholar and critic, the late Dr. Robertson Smith—

"Another point in which criticism removes

> a serious difficulty is the interpretation of the Imprecatory Psalms, which can never be explained as having a private reference to David without introducing an element of personal vindictiveness of a kind greatly calculated to give offence. The injuries done to David by Ahitophel and others, to whom these psalms are currently supposed to refer, were largely personal. David could not say that he was persecuted as the representative of God's cause in Israel, and without sin on his part. On any interpretation these psalms bear, more than most others, the impress of the limitations of the Old Covenant; but at least the element of personal vindictiveness disappears when we assign them, as we have every right to do, to later times of persecution, when the fortunes at stake were not those of an individual, but of the cause of God's truth against treachery within and persecuting heathenism without."[1]

The Imprecatory Psalms, in fact, are shown by the critics to express, not the vulgar and detestable spirit of personal hatred, but the less contemptible but even more relentless and destructive temper of religious fanaticism. There is no doubt a vast difference between the two. Personal hatred is hardly consistent with a generous nature or with a large intellect;

[1] *Old Test. in Jewish Church*, Lect. vii.

it belongs to narrow and stupid characters. With religious fanaticism, however, it is quite otherwise. Not the worst but often the best of men will pour into their religious contentions all and more than all the concentrated and continuing malignity which commonly mark the undying resentment of the malicious man, or the less guilty vendetta of the savage. They are not the worst men who are ready to cry with the psalmist whenever their version of truth is opposed and imperilled: "*Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.*" It does not help matters to be told that, when we repeat these imprecations, we are mentally to apply them, not to our personal opponents, but to the enemies (as we judge) of God. For that is to add an element of blasphemy as a substitute for the element of malignity, since in supposing our procedure to be acceptable to God, we credit the Almighty Father with the same kind of malice as we should be ashamed to tolerate in ourselves. And this becomes altogether absurd when we remember that our Saviour made the all-embracing charity of God the very ground of His condemnation of human malice. "*I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His*

sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." I suppose that the worst persecutions have been the most sincere in religious motive, because, when once the honour and truth of Gód are made the pleas of violence, there can be no turning back, no compromise, no room for the gentler elements of human nature to assert themselves. Persecution as a political necessity is repulsive, and argues in those who are responsible for it a cynical contempt for truth and justice; but it is never so thoroughgoing as the persecution which is carried out by sincerely religious men. Until the notion that God can be pleased by procedures which are intrinsically unfair and cruel—that "*the wrath of man*" can, notwithstanding the apostle, "*work the righteousness of God*"—has been uprooted from men's minds there is always possible the criminal arrogance of religious fanaticism. I say, then, that however illuminating the critical view of these imprecations may be, when we are considering their place in the religious evolution of Israel's memorable history, yet, when we are seeking some intelligible justification for our use of them in common worship, we are not in the least assisted by being allowed to transfer sentiments (which are always and everywhere unlawful for Christian men to admit into their minds) from one class of individuals, offensive to us on private grounds, to another and larger

class whom we dislike on grounds that may be called religious. Imagine the most wicked and mischievous persons now existing amongst us —the worst kind of publican, for instance, or the conductor of one of the gaming-hells which are every now and then revealed to us by the efforts of the police, or the organizer of prostitution—I say, take the worst person you can imagine, and ask yourself whether, as a disciple of the Blessed Saviour who died on the Cross to save all men, you could dare to repeat this psalm with deliberate reference even to such. And if you cannot do this even in such a case, then ask yourself what meaning at all you can give to these imprecations; and, if you must acknowledge that there is no possible reference of the words which is legitimately open to you, then do not shield yourself behind theories about the Bible and the Church from the clear conclusions of your conscience and your reason. Throw your influence into the scale of the demand for that drastic revision of our system which, in this particular, is so plainly demanded.

The use of the Imprecatory Psalms in Christian worship is sometimes strangely defended by the application made in the *Book of the Acts* of some expressions of the 109th Psalm to the case of the traitor Judas. St. Peter is represented as applying the psalm to his miserable colleague. "*Brethren*," he said to the assembled disciples, "*it was needful*

that the Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry. . . . For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

Let his habitation be made desolate,
And let no man dwell therein;

and,

His office let another take."

St. Augustine elaborates after his manner the suggestion of the apostle, and expounds the whole psalm as a detailed prophecy of Judas, and since, in spite of all his exegetic feats, there were some things in the psalm which seemed to require another application, he made Judas stand as the symbol of the Jewish nation, and added an exposition from that point of view. He is not altogether unconscious of the contrast which exists between the psalmist's attitude of mind towards opponents and that required by the Gospel. By insisting on the exclusively predictive character of the psalm, however, he succeeds to some extent in evading the difficulty. Here is his statement, which has the greater interest, since it has been adapted to his own clever but unconvincing apology for the psalm by an eminent living bishop of our Church—

"He (*i.e.* Christ) then beginneth to

prophesy what they should receive for this very impiety; detailing their lot in such a manner *as if He wished its realization from a desire of revenge;* while He declareth what was to happen with the most absolute certainty, and what of God's justice would come upon such worthily. *Some not understanding this mode of predicting the future, under the appearance of wishing evil, suppose hatred to be returned for hatred, and an evil will for an evil will; since in truth it belongeth to few to distinguish in what way the punishment of the wicked pleaseth the accuser, who longeth to satiate his enmity; and in how widely different a way it pleaseth the judge, who with a righteous mind punisheth sins.* For the former returneth evil for evil; but the judge when he punisheth doth not return evil for evil, since he returneth justice to the unjust; and what is just is surely good. . . . *Let not then the blind pervert the light of the Scriptures, imagining that God doth not punish sins; nor let the wicked flatter themselves, as if He rendered evil for evil.*"[1]

From this point of view the psalm is separated altogether from its historical setting; it is simply a detailed forecast of facts which are to be interpreted as a demonstration of the

[1] St. Augustine on the Psalms, v. 213.

divine justice. It is but an adaptation of this view to say with the Bishop of Birmingham that "the claim of these psalms still remains a necessary part of the claim of the Christian soul."

> "We must not only recognize the reality of divine judgments in time and eternity, bodily and spiritual; we must not only acquiesce in them because they are God's; we must go on to claim of God the manifestation of His just judgment, so that holiness and joy, sin and failure, shall be seen to coincide."[1]

In plain words, we are advised to read into the imprecations a general desire that every wicked person may be punished, and every good person made happy. There are two fatal objections to any such proposal.

In the first place, we can no longer pretend to believe that this psalm is predictive. Our whole conception of Hebrew prophecy has been changed since we have learned from the critics that the primary reference to every prophet's words were to his own generation. We are quite agreed in setting aside the theory that David wrote this psalm, in spite of the fact that St. Peter, echoing the general belief of the early Christians, affirmed that he did. We do not believe that there is any allusion whatever either to Judas Iscariot, or to the nation of the

[1] *Lux Mundi*, p. 350, 4th edition.

Jews, or to evil men generally. We are quite sure that the writer of these imprecations intended to describe and to denounce the oppressors of his faith and nation, and we cannot possibly accept St. Augustine's method of avoiding the contradiction which they present to the spirit of the Gospel.

In the next place, it is quite impossible to twist the actual language of the psalm to such a reference as the Bishop of Birmingham suggests. Something must be allowed to the common-sense of plain men, and to the meaning of words. It is beyond the power of ordinary folk to carry in their minds the subtle devices which even the cleverest ecclesiastics may suggest for getting rid of the manifest sense of the language placed in their mouths, in the interests—so it must be presumed—of their devotion.

There is one more consideration of the utmost importance which we must take into account. The spirit, whether of personal malignity, which the language itself certainly seems to express, or of religious fanaticism, which the critics suggest, is not only a bad and un-Christian spirit, but one which easily enters the human breast. The very fact that these ancient imprecations have been able to maintain their place in Christian usage is itself deeply and sadly significant. Why is it that, in spite of protests renewed again and again, we have

not yet been able to purge our worship of the "Damnatory Clauses" with which the so-called Athanasian Creed begins? The spirit which dictated those clauses would be at no loss to discover the spiritual value of the Imprecatory Psalms. Indeed it is the same spirit, and that not the spirit of Christ, but the spirit of Moses. The present Bishop of Chester has drawn attention to the language current in the orthodox circles in which the Athanasian Creed was composed and used. One example will suffice. This is how a Spanish council of 693 concludes its statement of the faith—

> "And all who do not stand by it in every, even the least degree, or have receded or shall recede from it . . . or do not believe without the slightest shadow of doubt" (what the four general and other councils have decreed) "shall be punished with the sentence of eternal damnation, and in the end of the world shall burn with the devil and his angels in devouring flames."[1]

The Old Testament has always had a dangerous attraction for Christians. Its lower moral standard and mechanical conception of morality have been plainly more accessible, and immensely more agreeable, to men than the higher and more spiritual morality of the Gospel. The consecration of human malice to religious ends—and that is what religious

[1] Vide *The Athanasian Creed*, p. 23, 1905.

fanaticism amounts to in the last analysis—is a far easier matter than the total suppression of it. The narrow nationalism of ancient Israel has always been nearer men's common modes of thought and speech, more compatible with their immediate interests, less disgusting to their patriotic pride than the calm, tolerant, just, unaggressive temper of the Gospel. In point of fact, if you will take a view of Christian history, and examine the currently-accepted Christian morality, you will find that both are far more closely related to the Old Testament than to the New. The 109th Psalm is a more faithful expression of the actual temper of Christendom than the Sermon on the Mount. It is not, therefore, the unimportant thing we might be disposed to think it, thus to leave the language of a discarded and inferior morality in the usage of Christian folk. We cannot play with interests which lie so close to the heart of our religion.

Not the Old Testament, not the Church of the past, not the Church of to-day, not the conventional morality of our own nation may be accepted as competent to set aside or explain away the moral demands of Christ Himself: "*Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you ; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.*" We cannot safely

forget that our Saviour set the duty of forgiveness in the very forefront of His demand, nay, He entrenched it in the very heart of Christian worship, when He imposed the Lord's Prayer on His Church, to be not merely a form of prayer for the use of Christians, but also the model and measure of all acceptable worship. "*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*" It needs no words to point the contrast between the Lord's Prayer and this barbarous psalm, which we have none the less been singing to-night. It is strange and melancholy how patient of such contrasts Christian folk can be. Let me give you an extreme example which I came across recently. When I was last in Scotland I was shown in a country house the MS. copy of the session book of *Kiltearn* for the years 1698–1705. Among many curious and interesting entries was one which recorded the punishing of a parishioner for "*breaking a stalk of corn on the Sabbath day.*" One could not but wonder whether the minister and elders of that parish had ever read their New Testament at all. If they had done so, they could not have escaped the memorable passage which records our Saviour's action in the corn-fields. Extreme and almost grotesque as this is, it is not one whit more astonishing, and far less serious, than the contrast which Christian folk are daily presenting in their own behaviour between the

teaching of Christ and their own behaviour. Well may we all make our own the petitions of the Litany—

"*From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us.*"

XVII

CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

(PREACHED IN ST. DAVID'S (WELSH) CHURCH, PADDINGTON GREEN)

"He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible."—Hebrews xi. 27.

THE reference of these striking words is, as you will at once recall, to the lawgiver Moses, who has his place in the great procession of spiritual heroes by title of the faith which he exhibited when, as a young man, he "*chose rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*" According to the popular belief Moses had an assured position in the court of Egypt, where he was the adopted son of the princess, and the favourite of the Pharaoh. This assured position, however, depended upon his acceptance of one condition, which might have seemed easy enough to most men, but which threw into revolt the best elements of this young man's character. Would he repudiate his ancestral race, and disclaim for himself any interest in its mysterious hopes? Would he

consent to be an Egyptian, in order to enjoy the future which the romantic circumstances of his childhood had brought within his reach? There was much to induce him to take this course. The famous legend describes him as owing much, even his preservation from death, to the kindly interest of the Egyptian princess; he had grown to manhood in the society of Egypt; his link with his own people was the slightest conceivable, although upon it everything depended. Moses, however, had not been so distant from his nation as not to have learned the sacred secret of its religious hope; he had received from his mother when, as nurse, she had reared him for Pharaoh's daughter, such a training as made it impossible for him to mistake the religious meaning of the decision which in due course he had to take. So long as there was peace between the two peoples all went well; but when the evil days of persecution came, and Israel's national existence was threatened by the relentless hatred of the Egyptians, then Moses had to make his choice and to take his side. "*By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.*"

What is this hero-making force which transforms the Egyptian courtier into the patriot leader of the oppressed people of God? Perhaps we may describe faith as the blending of the two faculties of the Spirit, insight and

foresight, the power to see through events, and the power to see beyond them. Nations not less than individuals are saved by faith, and, of all nations, that which stands above all others in this respect is the nation of Israel. Faith is a technical term of the Christian religion, and as such perhaps seems somewhat out of place when we discuss the characteristics of nations. Substitute the word *imagination* and you will have secured much, if not all, of the sense of the religious word. There are nations which are curiously lacking in this quality, and which seem, almost for that reason, to possess an extraordinary effectiveness in all practical affairs. The Assyrians, for example, appear in the records of Israel as pre-eminently lacking in imagination—a coarse, brutal, unrelenting race, that pursued its policy without taking account of consequences, and spared nothing that crossed the path of its ambition. To the prophets of Israel this aspect of the Assyrian power seemed especially revolting. You remember the indignant horror with which Habakkuk describes the oppressor of his nation. "*Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness*," so he cries to God, "*wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he; and makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the*

creeping things, that have no ruler over them? He taketh up all of them with the angle, he catcheth them in his net and gathereth them in his drag: therefore he rejoiceth and is glad. Therefore he sacrificeth unto his net, and burneth incense unto his drag; because by them his portion is fat, and his meat plenteous." It would be difficult to find a more effective protest against the materialistic enthusiasm of a nation that prevailed by brute force and despised the higher civilization which it crushed. The Romans are not to be named in the same category as the Assyrians, for they were the architects of a wonderful and lasting social order, and enriched the world with the notion and achievement of law; but when we compare them with that weaker race which they overcame and despised, we are conscious of the same contrast, though in a less emphatic form. The Greeks were an imaginative race, which the Romans were not, and we can see, as we trace the course of history, and take account of the factors of our present civilization, that the highest elements in the mingled heritage into which we have entered have come from them rather than from their conquerors. Judæa and Hellas are more than Nineveh and Rome. In both cases there is strangely united in the chalice of national fate the extremest political disaster and the widest and most enduring influence. Is it extravagant to apply the phrase of the sacred

writer to the case of these martyr nations: "*They endured, as seeing Him who is invisible*"?

I have the honour on this occasion of addressing the members of another race, which presents to the view of the historical student the same amazing and suggestive contrast of political failure and wide-reaching influence. The Celtic race stands at conspicuous disadvantage in political achievement when it is compared with that Teutonic race which has in so many ways crossed its path and humbled its pride. The architects of the marvellous material civilization of the modern world are not Celts, and at this moment the prevailing factors of the world's politics are not Celtic. Irish, Welsh, Highland Gaels, Bretons, all are now among the weaker nationalities whose political destinies are for ever linked with the more powerful races of mankind. So far there is an obvious parallel with the historical *rôle* of Judah and Hellas which may well arrest the attention of such a congregation as this. Can we advance a stage further, and claim that the Celtic race stands contrasted with its more powerful contemporaries as the Jews and the Greeks stood with reference to their conquerors? At least we may say, without going beyond the facts of history, that there has been an aspect of Celtic history which permits the question, and that there are elements of the Celtic temperament

which suggest an affirmative answer. If, as perhaps is inevitable when we think of Celtic Christianity, we carry back our thoughts across the centuries to that distant time when the civilizing of Europe was largely, if not mainly, in the hands of the Celtic enthusiasts, we cannot hesitate to recognize that the principal force which those spiritual heroes were bringing to bear on the gross and tyrannous society of their time was precisely this Celtic quality of imagination exalted, purified, and consecrated by Christianity. We are only now beginning to do justice to the courage and devotion of these forgotten saints of the Celtic Church who went forth in the power of their divine enthusiasm to face infinite risks in order to conquer their own baser instincts, and to raise on the sin-stained earth the austere and unworldly witness of the Spirit. We try vainly to picture to ourselves the steady exaltation of mind of the multitudes of solitaries who ventured to push over the dangerous northern seas beyond the known limits of human society in their fragile hand-made boats, in order to banish themselves from the corrupting atmosphere of their native country, and, almost in their own despite, to become the evangelists of the storm-swept islands of the North. It was a divine madness which had invaded their souls, and fired them with the passion of pilgrimage.

"St. Brandan sails the northern main;
The brotherhoods of saints are glad.
He greets them once, he sails again;
So late!—such storms!—The Saint is mad!

He heard, across the howling seas,
Chime convent-bells on wintry nights;
He saw, on spray-swept Hebrides,
Twinkle the monastery lights.

But north, still north, St. Brandan steered—
And now no bells, no convents more!
The hurtling Polar lights are neared,
The sea without a human shore."

Is not the only possible formula of such mad ventures as these precisely this, which the sacred writer inscribes on the heroic tradition of the lawgiver: "*He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible*"? It is, of course, very difficult for the modern mind to appreciate this extreme and, as it seems, fantastic asceticism, and I think we do not err in regarding it generally as an unhealthy development of the Christian spirit. But surely beneath the extravagance, in spite of the admixture of doctrinal error, there was the movement of the genuine Christian spirit, wrestling desperately with the gross obvious forces of evil which bore down upon it on every hand. The witness of the anchorite, starving himself in solitude in some narrow cell, perhaps attached to a monastery, perhaps wholly separated from human neighbourhood on some remote island or wind-swept cliff, was a true and a necessary witness. The paramount

character of barbarian society is its utter degraded animalism. Man has sunk to the closest conformity to the beast to which he can sink. The savage is the child of his impulses, the bond-slave of his fleshly appetites. The most necessary and the most difficult of tasks is to carry into his darkened mind any perception of the higher life, spiritual, supernatural, reaching beyond the grave, which demands the subjection of the bodily appetites, the self-submission of the man to irksome discipline. Who shall criticize severely the methods by which the Christian conscience attempted to fulfil this supreme and all but hopeless task? The hermit riveted the notice of his contemporaries. He was a protest and a portent. It was impossible to miss the lesson of that voluntary sacrifice of all that makes life tolerable. An advance out of mere animalism had been made when the rude savage bent his head in homage before the emaciated victim of the faith in the Unseen. Perhaps by no less violent means could the first steps be taken of that long road which leads men out of barbarian darkness into the full blessed light and liberty of Christ's service. The world in which we are now living has changed greatly since the days when the Celtic solitaries abashed the crude self-indulgence of our Teutonic forefathers. It might well seem a futile and even fantastic task to endeavour to find in their distant age

any serviceable lesson for our own guidance, and yet nothing less is my present intention. I shall maintain that the ancient antithesis which confronted the believers in the Unseen in the rude age, which was illumined and saved by the ascetics, is confronting us now, and that again, though of course under changed conditions, and in widely different forms, it is this Celtic quality of imagination which most of all we need, which, if but once more it may be laid on the altar of discipleship, and consecrated to the service of the Spirit, shall again lift society to God. Will any thoughtful observer of our own society resent the statement that it is tending to sink into the base and barren selfishness of materialism? There are, as I read the records of human civilization, four invariable tokens of materialism, that disease of the human spirit which is the proper opposite, and the natural alternative, of faith in the Unseen. Superstition, cruelty, sensuality, suicide—these are the marks of a materialistic society. Is it the case that they are the marks of our society to-day? I do not forget that it is the besetting sin of preachers to exaggerate the faults of their own time, and that precisely for this reason there is a suggestive family likeness between the sermons of moralists in all ages and countries. I do not forget that there are many tokens in our midst which point to a growing impatience with the prevailing materialism of

society, and which must be fairly taken into account by every man who aspires to judge the tendencies of the present day. I do not forget that one who sees modern life mainly as it exists in a great capital city is apt to lose the sense of proportion, and to leave out of his reckoning aspects of the national life, which are little visible in the strife of tongues and the tumult of the city, but are none the less potent and representative. Nevertheless, after making all the allowance I can for all these circumstances, and speaking with full consciousness of the limitations of knowledge and temperament which go far to discount any personal estimate of contemporary life, I cannot but own that I think that our English society is showing, by many ominous evidences, that the reign of materialism is tending to prevail within it. Do but glance at these four cardinal symptoms of the decay of faith which I have named. Superstition has ever revealed its presence by the strangely-combined tempers of credulity and intolerance. You have but to glance at the voluminous evangelistic literature of the last few years to see that, in spite of the much-vaunted spread of education among us, our people remain as credulous as ever. This waxing credulity provides a promising soil for the baleful enterprise of every form of religious and scientific imposture, and it is easy to see that history is repeating itself in the resuscitation

of all manner of moribund beliefs, as a consequence of the wave of religious excitement which has been passing over the country. The great Methodist movement of the eighteenth century gave a new lease of life to the belief in witchcraft, and to all forms of bibliolatry. The Tractarian Movement of the nineteenth century galvanized into life a whole crop of sacramental superstitions, and I believe it could be demonstrated that the type of Churchmanship now prevailing among the Anglican clergy approaches more nearly to the standpoints of the Middle Ages than at any previous period since the Reformation. Superstition is the parasite of religious enthusiasm, and, like all parasites, it flourishes at the expense of its partner. Of intolerance it hardly needs to speak, so many and so shameless are its expressions among us at the present time. Let it suffice that I should remind you of the squalid history of the educational conflict which for some time past has confused and degraded politics. North of the Tweed a whole nation, and that a nation pre-eminent for its devotion to high ideals of national achievement, and pledged by its famous history to the cause of religious liberty, is given up to the baleful frenzies of denominational conflict. It is clear enough that in the twentieth century we are far from being either rational or tolerant. Cruelty and sensuality are ever combined. It

was so in that wonderful older world of the Roman Empire, whose life as our admirable scholars are making it known to us in an almost incredible fulness of detail is seen to be a curiously close transcript of our own, and it is assuredly so with us. I will not put in as evidence of the cruelty of modern civilization the monstrous and continuing atrocities of the Russian Government, because it were an unpardonable abuse of language to describe that Government as civilized. But I would point to the grievous oppression of the more helpless races by these who serve themselves of their land and their labour. I would point to the waxing violence of economic strife within civilized communities, the indifference to life shown by the organizers of strikes, the brutal contempt of the humane aspect of industrial organization shown by the great associations of capitalists, and in a vast multitude of individual employers. I would point to the deplorable facts implied in the extensive and most necessary labours of *the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Children.* As to *sensuality*, let the squalid records of the divorce court tell their tale, and the shameful story of the London streets be listened to. In the wake of superstition, with its terror-driven credulity and persecuting bigotry, of cruelty which sinks the life of myriads to a dull and hopeless servitude, of sensuality which fouls the very springs of human happiness, and

breaks up the constituting unit of all ordered society, there comes the miserable crime of suicide. The man who begins by holding cheap the life of others ends by holding cheap his own. He who makes a mock of woman's honour becomes the traitor to his own. The devotee of this world, who in its name and for its sake abandons all concern with a higher world beyond, finds himself cheated even of his taste for this world. Suicide is coming back on the stream of returning paganism, together with pagan profligacy, pagan luxury, pagan superstition. The immense and dismaying contrasts of wealth and poverty, which were so alarming in the dying classical society, are existing among us on a scale which dwarfs the wealth of the ancients into pettiness. The spectacle daunts men, and kills their interest in the struggle for existence. The multi-millionaire is even more difficult to fit into any tolerable scheme of a morally-governed universe than the historic conqueror, who was the scourge of God to sinful nations.

> "When, looking on the present face of things,
> I see one man, of men the meanest too!
> Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
> With mighty nations for his underlings,
> The great events with which old story rings
> Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great;
> Nothing is left which I can venerate:
> So that almost a doubt within me springs
> Of Providence, such emptiness at length
> Seems at the heart of all things."

The unbelief of the mass of men has very little to do with the questions which interest critics and apologists, for indeed the issue on which their religious allegiance turns is not primarily intellectual, but moral. And the spectacle of these vast unearned fortunes, spent selfishly and, even worse sometimes, spent in luxury which revolts the conscience of men, is a far greater solvent of faith than all the arguments of all the sceptics from Celsus to Blatchford. I do not say that this unbelief is reasonable—unbelief of the truth can never be reasonable, and Christianity can never be more or less than the truth—but it is very intelligible. For the same reason asceticism will always be the most effective of all evangelistic forces. The multitude judges the worth of the message by the aspect of the messenger's life, and only regards his arguments as they are clearly related to his conduct. Again, I do not defend the logic. False gospels have been preached by sincere men, and the truth has been often uttered by the lips of knaves as well as of innocents; but the popular judgment is intelligible, and must be reckoned with. If, then, my contention is sound, and we are again confronted with a prevailing materialism, it follows that we need once more just that high unearthly type of Christianity which it seems that the Celtic temperament is ordained to contribute to the life of the Church of Christ.

The modes by which that type shall emerge under the novel and complex conditions of the modern world are hard to imagine, but by no means impossible, and when we review the history of the past we can well believe that a Religion which has been patient of so many and amazing transformations has resources of self-adaptation which will not be unequal to the demands of the future. The Celtic race may be destined to repeat in this latest age of the world the sublime function which it was charged to fulfil for the nascent civilization of Europe, and to save Christendom from a more degrading, because a more penetrating and masterful, materialism. The destiny of every nation must be realized by the individuals who compose it, and their power to accept for themselves the mission of their race will reveal, as by a divine touchstone, their own spiritual quality. Therefore, as I began so I must end my sermon by speaking not of the tasks assigned in the providence of God to nations, but of the immediate obligations laid on individuals. The secret of every genuinely religious life is uttered in our text. "*To endure, as seeing Him who is invisible*," is the true formula of the faithful life in the twentieth century as in the last. The faith which is insight, and the faith which is foresight, are still the twin constituents of the conquering force by which the world is overcome. That

force, plainly active in high and simple lives which at every point attest the conviction that the unseen things of eternity are the true pilot stars of human living, and the only worthy objects of human service, is still the witness which wins men to Christ. Moreover, this best and only convincing witness is precisely that which every one of us, wherever placed in the complex order of the world, is able to yield to the glory of God and the salvation of men.

XVIII

THE DIFFICULTY OF A REVELATION WHICH IS ALSO A DEVELOPMENT

(PREACHED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW IN THE BUTE HALL)

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."—Galatians i. 8.

"For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."—1 Corinthians xiii. 12, 13.

In these divergent utterances of the apostle Paul is indicated a difficulty which has gravely perplexed Christian men in the past, and which presses on many minds at the present time. The difficulty may perhaps be sufficiently stated for our present purpose in this way: Christianity is the final and plenary revelation of God. It is therefore an unchanging message of truth, fixed in advance of the experiences of Christian men, and only fulfilling its divine purpose in so far as it is kept inviolable and transmitted faith-

fully through the ages. This on the one hand. Christianity, however, is no less truly a progressive principle, inspiring a process of moral and spiritual development, and accordingly its truest version is to be found on the lips of its most recent professors; or, to speak more exactly, the latest phase of its evolution reveals most authoritatively the content of its original message. This on the other hand. The difficulty is involved in the combination of these two characters of finality and progress.

How could the apostle be justified in placing under anathema all who should depart from that version of Christianity which he had himself preached unless he could vindicate for himself a religious infallibility? How could he represent himself, and by necessary implication all other Christians, as limited in the vision and knowledge of spiritual truth, and at the same time expect to be believed when he advanced on behalf of his specific teaching the claims of finality and perfection? Even if the original message itself could fairly be credited with such attributes, how—in default of an authorised version thereof—could they attach to the statements of an admittedly fallible exponent? The Galatians could have no better assurance of the truth of St. Paul's account of Christianity than that which they had as to his knowledge and integrity. Their act of faith was rather in him than in his Gospel. It would be easy, of course,

to show by a just exegesis, that the two passages which I have combined and contrasted in the text do by no means justify any imputation on the apostle's consistency, nor do they necessarily conflict. He was not thinking of any specific message or doctrine when he spoke of his "*Gospel*," but rather of the whole religious standpoint which he had represented to the Galatians, and which he justly affirmed to be incompatible with the legalism of the Judaizing teachers, who had temporarily displaced him in the regard of his converts. Similarly, when he described the limited range of his spiritual vision, and the partial and relative character of his religious knowledge, he was not thinking of his apostolic function, nor stating the conditions under which "*the truth as it is in Jesus*" was to be presented to men, and accepted by them. If, therefore, I take leave to place the two utterances side by side, and to serve myself of the contrast they display, it is not in order to criticize St. Paul, but that I may be able to set before you, in language which is at once impressive and familiar, the difficulty involved in the twofold character of Christianity.

Let me observe that the violent language of anathema has been the official language of the Churches of Christendom. Christianity has been set out in statements, bound up with disciplines, tied to ecclesiastical descriptions, and these have been clothed with another authority

than that of their authors. Many and various as have been the versions of the Gospel, all have claimed the character of fidelity to the original revelation. It is always "*for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints*" that Christians have been called to "*contend earnestly*," however recent their organization or novel their shibboleth.

In former ages the incongruousness of this procedure escaped the notice of men because they generally lacked the knowledge of any other version of Christian truth than that which actually faced them. The unfamiliar is always also the suspected; from suspicion to dislike there is but a short step, and from dislike to violence hardly a longer. As soon, however, as knowledge was diffused, and the actual contrast between what was current and what was original became apparent, then at once the difficulty I have indicated emerged and claimed attention. How far ought the current system of Christianity to be corrected and disallowed by the original version as preserved in the apostolic literature? How far were the original doctrines and practices of Christianity competent to guide the thought and life of the Church of Christ in later times? In what sense was the faith "*once for all delivered to the saints*"? Could any divine authentication be imagined for the immense and complicated system of historic Christianity which, with

awakened minds and eyes full of misgiving, the men of the sixteenth century looked upon?

That system, we know, had come to press with cruel severity alike on the conscience and on the intelligence of religious and thoughtful men. It was a twofold repugnance that moved the protagonists of the movements of Reformation, which found their most conspicuous and representative exponent in Martin Luther. The New Testament, read now again by scholars in the original Greek, and by multitudes of the laity in the vernacular translations which everywhere made their appearance, seemed to provide not merely a complete condemnation of the current ecclesiastical version of Christianity, but also a divine substitute for it. There is an element of pathos in the jubilant confidence with which the Reformers based themselves on the "*Word of God.*" Against the intolerable and now discredited authority of the Church they raised another authority, which seemed to them plainly divine. The fervours of the great enfranchisement were too speedily followed by the distractions and exasperations of controversy. Under the severe and unrelaxing pressure of the Jesuit dialectic, the Protestant apologists were driven to formulate a theory of Biblical authority which was little consistent with the bold freedom with which the Fathers of the Reformation had treated the sacred text. The Bible seemed to take for Protestants the

same character of infallible authority as that which all Catholics attributed to the Church. Two consequences very unfavourable to Protestantism followed. On the one hand, the Bible was plainly inadequate for the purposes it was required to serve. An ancient book, or a collection of ancient books—be their spiritual quality the highest conceivable—could never really constitute an authority in the same effective sense as the Church organized under the hierarchy; for every exercise of authority raised the question of interpretation, and—as the Jesuit controversialists were quick to point out—there was no middle course between accepting the established authority of the Church and unmitigated individualism. On the other hand, the attempt to force this character on the Scripture compelled Protestants to give an exaggerated and unfortunate importance to its least spiritual elements. But the intolerable discrepancy between the Roman system and the New Testament remained, and so long as that was the case the dialectical triumphs of the Roman champions were barren. The domestic quarrels of the Reformers did, indeed, give a certain plausibility to the Catholic claim to an unalterable fidelity to primitive truth, for, by comparison with its rivals, the Roman Church was stable and consistent. While both sides claimed to represent the original revelation, and both agreed in the

supposition that that original revelation had been completely made at the start, and was always authoritatively known to Christians, the Protestants were under the great disadvantage that they could reach no agreement as to what that original revelation actually was. Two remarkable attempts were made in England to release the Protestant cause from the vicious circle in which it seemed to be imprisoned. Chillingworth and George Fox—the most brilliant of the earlier Anglicans and the founder of the Quakers—were led to adopt positions which have been found, after the lapse of two centuries, to merit the careful examination of serious men, and perhaps to indicate a satisfactory defence of the Protestant claim. I may remind you that both these men had passed through experiences which qualified them for the task which they were called to fulfil. Chillingworth had, as a very young man, been overcome by the Jesuit arguments, and had avowed himself a convert. He had been sent to the Roman seminary at Douay, and ordered to compose a statement of the reasons which had led him to renounce Protestantism. In the process he recovered his mental balance, and the nearer view of the Roman system, which his residence at Douay enabled him to obtain, added to his intellectual dissent from the Roman arguments a profound moral aversion to the Roman method. He was

led to the composition of his great work, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, by the desire to champion his friend, Dr. Christopher Potter, who had been roughly handled by a Jesuit named Edward Knott. In this work he submits the Roman case to a merciless dissection, and then restates the Protestant position. We need not concern ourselves with the first, but the last enters directly into our present discussion. It will be best for me to give you his own words—

> "By the religion of Protestants," he says, "I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melanchthon; nor the Confession of Augusta, or Geneva; nor the Catechism of Heidelberg; nor the Articles of the Church of England; no, nor the harmony of Protestant Confessions; but *that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of their faith and actions; that is, the Bible. The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants!* Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion; but as matter of faith and religion neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others without most high and most

schismatical presumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there are popes against popes, councils against councils, some fathers against others, the same fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age. Traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended ; but there are few or none to be found : no tradition but only of Scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in, in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. *In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only for any considering man to build upon.* This, therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe ; this I will profess, according to this I will live, and for this, if there be occasion, I will not only willingly, but even gladly, lose my life, though I should be sorry that Christians should take it from me. Propose me anything out of this Book, and require whether I believe it or no, and seem it

> never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this ; God hath said so, therefore it is true. In other things I will take no man's liberty of judgment from him ; neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse man, nor the worse Christian, I will love no man the less, for differing in opinion from me. And what measure I mete to others I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore that men ought not, to require any more of any man than this : to believe the Scripture to be God's word, to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it."[1]

I make no apology for quoting at such length, for the intrinsic interest of the quotation may well justify my procedure, and I am relieved from the necessity of guarding against misconceptions of Chillingworth's position.

George Fox was passing through his spiritual crisis about the time when Chillingworth died a prisoner in the hands of the Parliamentary army at Chichester. He was the antithesis of the Oxford scholar, a man of the people, who knew little of books, but had breathed from childhood that atmosphere of religious individualism which at that time marked the popular life

[1] Vide *Works*, p. 354, 10th edition, 1742.

of England. He heard with surprise, which became both alarm and disgust, the furious contentions of the various sectaries, of whom all without exception pressed the infallible authority of the Bible as they themselves understood it. He wearied of the futility and uncharity of it all, and went aside to be out of the "*strife of tongues and the tumult of the city.*" The ministers of Christ had failed him, and he turned to Christ Himself.

> "My desires after the Lord grew stronger"—I am quoting a few representative sentences from his strangely interesting journal—"and zeal in the pure knowledge of God, and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing. For though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew Him not but by revelation, as He who hath the key did open, and as the Father of Life drew me to His Son by His Spirit."[1]

As against the vehement Bibliolaters of the Commonwealth, George Fox advanced a still more venerable authority than that of the letter of Scripture, the authority from which the Scripture derived all its claim on human regard, and which alone could reveal to the aspiring and receptive spirit of man its eternal and life-giving message—the authority of the

[1] *Vide* p. 56, 7th edition, 1852.

Holy Spirit directly communicating with the believer. The process and the conclusion of the Quaker's conversion are, perhaps, best told in Faber's singularly beautiful poem, "The Starry Skies." It is not without suggestiveness that we find ourselves able to interpret the mystical sectary of the seventeenth century by the mystical Roman Catholic of the nineteenth. Take the concluding stanzas—

"Twice had I erred: a distant God
Was what I could not bear;
Sorrows and cares were at my side;
I longed to have Him there.

But God is never so far off
As even to be near;
He is within: our spirit is
The home He holds most dear.

To think of Him as by our side
Is almost as untrue
As to remove His throne beyond
Those skies of starry blue.

So all the while I thought myself
Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy, I walked the earth
Myself God's sanctuary."

Inevitably the Quakers were accused of belittling the Scripture, and perhaps in the view of that age no accusation was more serious or better justified; but the answer of the Quaker apologist, Robert Barclay, arrested attention at the time, and has certainly gathered

strength with time. Give me leave to read to you one luminous paragraph. He is treating of the calumny, as he naturally calls it, that Quakers are "vilifiers and deniers of the Scriptures."

> "Though," he says, "we do acknowledge the Scriptures to be very heavenly and divine writings, the use of them to be very comfortable and necessary to the Church of Christ, and though we also admire and give praise to the Lord for His wonderful providence in preserving these writings so pure and uncorrupted as we have them . . . yet we may not call them the principal fountain of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the first adequate rule of faith and manners; *because the principal fountain of truth must be the truth itself;* i. e. *that whose certainty and authority depends not upon another.* When we doubt of the streams of any river or flood we recur to the fountain itself, and having found it, there we desist; we can go no further, because there it springs out of the bowels of the earth, which are inscrutable. *Even so the writings and sayings of all men we must bring to the word of God, I mean the eternal word, and if they agree hereunto, we stand there.* For this word always proceedeth, and doth eternally proceed from God, in and by

> which the unsearchable wisdom of God, and unsearchable counsel and will conceived in the heart of God, is revealed unto us."[1]

If Chillingworth's argument be supplemented by that here stated it retains its proper force, and is relieved from what at first view seems to destroy it altogether. As against the claim of the Roman Church formally expressed in the Tridentine decrees and urged with astonishing energy and variety of application in the voluminous writings of the controversialists of the age—the claim to represent faithfully original Christianity, and to bridge the chasm between the current system and the New Testament by postulating a coequal authority in tradition—Chillingworth's argument was conclusive. The New Testament itself was the oldest and the only really trustworthy tradition, and therefore constituted the criterion of all other tradition claiming to be apostolic. So far the Protestant position outlined in the famous phrase we have quoted, "The Bible only is the religion of Protestants," was and is unassailable. When, however, the deeper questions are raised, and the matter at issue is not concerned with the claims of Churches, but with the ultimate bases of individual belief, it will be sufficiently evident to every one who has any acquaintance with the thought and

[1] Vide *Apology*, p. 66, 10th edition.

literature of the last century that the Quaker is a more satisfying teacher than the Anglican. For with the admission of literary and historical criticism to the choir of the sciences, a change of the most momentous character has passed over the attitude of thoughtful men towards the Scriptures. It is not necessary for me to develop this point, for indeed I may take it for granted.

"Reason," said Chillingworth, "will convince any man, unless he be of a perverse mind, that the Scripture is the word of God; and then no reason can be greater than this; God says so, therefore it is true" (p. 355). This short and easy way in religious controversy is not open to the men of our time. With such words before us it is not difficult to understand why the shock of criticism was at first far more severely felt in the Protestant camp than in the Catholic. The earliest effect of the new learning was to disallow the established method of Protestant apology, but the final result will be far different. Protestants will be released from the shackles of the seventeenth century, and restored to the larger liberty and bolder faith of the sixteenth. The Quaker prophet divined the truth which we are slowly and painfully learning. In so far as the Bible is the word of God it is self-evidencing, and where it cannot sustain its own claim to the conscience of the devout student, there, for

that student, it is no word of God. And if it be the case that in every devout student there is present the illuminating energy of the Spirit of God, then it will follow that, from the immense multiplicity of individual perceptions, there will emerge a true and infinitely suggestive consensus. The process of devout study has continued through all the ages from the first, amid many nations in many lands under all varieties of circumstance. The Bible, in the hands of a modern Christian, is an ancient book, and upon it rest the authentications of a long past. It is mere matter of fact that there is an unanimity as to the spiritual worth of certain parts of it. The individual student, whose heart "*burns within him*" as he in his turn reads the Gospel, or listens to the prophets and apostles, can know assuredly that his own perception of the truth of what he reads is confirmed by the long witness of the ages. If there be any validity in the often-quoted word of Augustine—"*securus judicat orbis terrarum*"—then it attaches to the case in which the individual student of the Bible applies it to the confirmation of his own perception of the divine word. Nothing can ever take the place of the direct recognition by the inspired conscience of the individual student; but the testimony of the individual ceases to be merely personal and subjective when it is seen to stand in line with the

consistent and accumulated testimony of the Christian society. Apart from the affirmation of the conscience the Bible has no spiritual authority. The fact that such affirmation has been freely rendered, not to the whole traditional Scripture, of course (it only needs to remember the character of the sacred volume as a collection of writings of unequal merit and of almost infinite variety in order to see the impossibility of any such indiscriminating approbation), but to the prevailing ideas of the Bible, and to many specific teachings, justifies us in postulating the unique and supreme character of Scripture. We are justified, nay, we are compelled to make the version of Christ's religion which we find in the New Testament the criterion of every other version which claims our acceptance. The vehement words of the apostle do not seem excessive when we reflect on the authority which the New Testament version of the everlasting Gospel can exert over our consciences.

"*Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.*" For this is to my thinking at least absolutely certain. No other version has ever succeeded in commanding the allegiance of the human conscience. The ecclesiastical versions have secured such acceptance as they have secured from religious men because they

could so far identify themselves with this older and more spiritual version as to make men suppose that, apart from themselves, they could not find it. Just in proportion to the extent in which this unreal alliance has been broken and men have been able to dissociate Christianity from the alien interests which have served themselves of its credit, and grown great under its shelter, has the fundamental unity of the Christian discipleship become apparent. The immense superiority of the Protestant position is nowhere more apparent than in the fact that it is free to recognize that unity wherever it manifests itself, though beneath the cowl of the monk and with the fearful instruments of the persecutor. "I am of all saints order, and all saints are of my order," said the most eloquent of Gallican bishops, outlining in the fervour of his practised rhetoric a wider fellowship than his charity could stretch to; and indeed he spoke more truly than he knew. The decay of the ecclesiastical systems, in so far as they claim to be commissioned by some divine right which can give law to Christian consciences, is making possible the recognition of a deeper agreement than their artificial uniformities could secure. May we not find, in the very process of ecclesiastical disintegration, the condition of the true spiritual progress which the apostle has outlined in the words of the text? Much is

changing; much is passing; the Christian consciousness grows richer with the experiences of the centuries, and the Church as she "presses forward" towards the divine goal ordained for her attainment "forgets the things that are behind, and stretches forward to the things that are before." It is no fanciful or indefensible application of the apostle's confession to place it in the mouth of the Church herself: "*For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*" The difficulty which we stated at the start of our discourse finds here its sufficient explanation. There is at the beginning of Christian history the supreme and final revelation of God in Christ. "*Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*" The long course of Christian experience has been a gradual but unintermitted advance in the knowledge and appropriation of the primitive revelation, and the progressive energy of the whole spiritual development has been the Holy Ghost, Teacher, Comforter, Guide, Spirit of Truth. The abiding element in Christian history—that which remains valid and precious for all succeeding ages, and stands always in vital continuity with the person of Jesus Christ—is not the theology nor yet the polity of the Church,

but the unfailing succession of the saints. And in this immortal succession there is a gradation of spiritual eminence, itself suggestive of a moral evolution proceeding within the sphere of discipleship, which draws the Master's example ever more luminously before men. "*Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*" Let me bring my sermon to its end by appropriating the words in which the greatest of the apostles explained the mysterious greatness of his own life, and uttered the secret of the continuing mystery of Christian service and Christian sanctity: "*For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again. Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more. Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.*"

THE END

THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

SOME BOOKS

ON

RELIGION & THEOLOGY

PUBLISHED BY

T. FISHER UNWIN,

1, ADELPHI TERRACE, LONDON, W.C.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

BY PROFESSOR W. BOUSSET,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF JESUS" AND "DIE RELIGION DES JUDENTUMS IM NEUTESTAMENTISCHEN ZEITALTER."

Translated by F. B. LOW.

With an Introduction. Crown 8vo, cloth, **5s.** net.

This work, which has had a very wide circulation in Germany, is an attempt to do for the history of religion in general what Harnack did for Christian history in his "What is Christianity?" It had its origin in a course of popular lectures, and is written with the lucidity and literary skill which characterise the work of German theologians of the younger Liberal school. Its aim is to show the many stages through which religion has passed up to its culmination in the Christian faith, to answer the question as to what religion is, by means of a historic survey. The author believes in the ultimate triumph of Christianity, which, shorn of all its excrescences, will save the world from both superstition and materialism.

Professor Bousset's reputation as a scholar stands high in Germany, and his book, while popular in form, is the outcome of deep and prolonged study.

"An exceedingly attractive and stimulating volume. The discussion exhibits wide and exact knowledge, and is full of helpful suggestion." —*Review of Theology and Philosophy*, in a Critique of the German edition.

"A brilliant historical essay . . . He draws a picture which even those who find fault with his method must admit to be grandly conceived."—*Spectator*.

Professor T. K. CHEYNE writes: "Its width of range places it at the head of popular books."

CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

BY OTTO PFLEIDERER, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN; AUTHOR OF "PAULINISM," "PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION ON THE BASIS OF ITS HISTORY," ETC.

Translated by DANIEL A. HUEBSCH, PH.D.

Crown 8vo, cloth, **5s.** net.

This book, written for the general reader, is probably the most comprehensive of recent works on Christian origins. It traces the preparation for Christianity in Greek Philosophy and Judaism, and deals with the problems surrounding the life and teaching of Jesus, with the doctrines of St. Paul and the sources from which they sprang, with the origin of the Gospels, and with the causes which led to the establishment of Church Authority. A remarkable feature of the book is the light which it sheds on the beginnings of Christianity by means of parallels drawn from other religions.

"A cordial welcome must be given to Professor Pfleiderer's course of popular lectures on 'Christian Origins.'"—*Inquirer.*

RELIGION AND HISTORIC FAITHS

BY OTTO PFLEIDERER, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

Crown 8vo, cloth, **5s.** net.

This volume contains a series of popular lectures delivered by Dr. Pfleiderer at Berlin. In selecting from the wealth of material before him, Dr. Pfleiderer was guided by the wish to bring out in the clearest possible way the characteristic features of the religions of the world, and to show therein points of difference and of contact. The subjects of the lectures are: The Essence of Religion—Religion and Ethics—Religion and Science—The Beginnings of Religion—The Chinese Religion—The Egyptian Religion—The Babylonian Religion—The Religion of Zarathustra and the Mithra Cult—Brahmanism and Gautama Buddha—Buddhism—Greek Religion—The Religion of Israel—Post-Exilic Judaism—Christianity—Islam.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

An Aid to Historical Study and a Condensed Commentary on the Gospels.

BY ERNEST DE WITT BURTON
AND SHAILER MATHEWS,

PROFESSORS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

Demy 8vo, cloth, **5s.** net.

In the preparation of this volume the authors have had specially in mind the needs of Students in Schools and Colleges, and in the advanced classes of Sunday-schools. It is designed especially to promote a systematic historical study of the Gospels along such lines as are ordinarily followed in constructive historical work. Its tone is entirely reverent and orthodox, and its general critical standpoint resembles that of Sanday's "Outlines of the Life of Christ."

THE ORIGINAL POEM OF JOB

Translated from the Restored Text.

BY E. J. DILLON, Doc. ORIENT. LANG.,

AUTHOR OF "THE SCEPTICS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT," ETC.

To which is appended "The Book of Job according to the Authorised Version."

Crown 8vo, cloth, **5s.**

Recent critical research has thrown much light on the scope and meaning of the wonderful poem of Job which has fascinated and baffled so many generations of men. The rediscovery by Professor Bickell, of Vienna, of the laws of Hebrew metre and of the text of the old Greek version has rendered plain many points hitherto obscure, and has shown that many unintelligible passages are later interpolations into the primitive text. It is this original text, critically reconstructed, which Dr. Dillon has translated, and his version should be of the greatest interest and value to students of the Old Testament.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE MODERNISTS

Their Reply to the Pope's Encyclical.

Translated from the Italian Edition.

With an Introduction by A. L. LILLEY, M.A.

Crown 8vo, cloth, **5s.** net.

This volume, the work of a group of Italian Catholics, is the fullest statement of the Modernists' position and aims that has yet appeared, and as such is a document of the utmost importance for the understanding of the new movement. It is at once an exposition of the Modernists' attitude towards the Higher Criticism, an outline of their religious philosophy, and an attempt to show that in restating Catholicism in the language of their age they are but following the example of the Fathers and the mediæval schoolmen. The book is written with singular lucidity, and no reader of it can fail to be struck by its courage, its candour, and its remarkable combination of religious faith and critical intelligence.

THE FINALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

BY GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER,

PROFESSOR OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, CHICAGO.

Demy 8vo, cloth, **18s.** net.

"This is a book of exceptional importance. It reminds one of the notable works of recent times, such as those of Martineau, Hatch, Ward, Sabatier. The author is a modern of the moderns. He treats in a masterly way many of the principal questions which are agitating the theological world at the present hour."—*Review of Theology and Philosophy.*

"The book is a great one, frank, bold, fearless. It is the best representative of liberal religious thought that the great University of Chicago has given us."—*Daily News.*

"We may say, without fear of contradiction, that this is one of the most radical and independent theological works America has sent us for many years."—*Christian World.*

BX 5133 H45 C5

Henson, Herbert Hensley, Bp. of Durham, 1863-1947.
Christ and the nation : Westminster and other sermons / by H. Hensley Henson. -- London : T. Fisher Unwin, 1908.
vii, 315p. ; 21cm.

18 sermons.

1. Church of England--Sermons. 2. Church and state--Sermons. I. Title.

CCSC/mmb

A25299